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THE

Corpus MS

(CORPUS CHRISTI COLL., OXFORD)

OF

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

EDITED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

PART I.

L2 n 5

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GROUP A. FRAGMENT I.

§ 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE.

CORPUS MS. (Oxford).

[N.B. The first 73 lines, and other gaps, are supplied from MS. Arch. Seld. B. 14, Bodleian Library.]

Here bigynneth the prolog of this book the which is namede the talis of Caunturbury in the whiche prolog thautour openly declarith the names of alle the pilgremes there condicionns *and* there array.

WHan that Apprille / with his shouris soote
the drought of Marche / hath *per*shid to the roote
and bathed eu*er*y veyne in swich licoure
of which v*er*tue / engendrid is the floure
whan zepherus eke / with his swete brethe
inspirid hath / in eu*er*y holt *and* hethe
the tendre croppis / *and* the yonge sonne
hath in the Ram / his halff cours I-ronne
and smale fowlis make melodie
that slepen al nyght / with open eyghe
so priketh hem nature / in here coragis
that longen folk to gon / on pilgr*i*magis
and Palmeris for to seke strange strondes
to serue halowes couthe / in sondre londes
and specially / from eu*er*y shiris ende
of Ingelond to Caunturbery thei wende
the holy blisfull mart*er* / for to seke
that hem hath holpen / whan thei were seke
bifill that on that seson on a day
in Suthwork atte Tabard as I lay
redy to wende / on my pilgr*i*mage
to Caunt*er*bury / with ful deuout corage
at night was come / in-to that hosterie
wel .xxix^{ti} in a companye
of sondry folk / bi auenture I-falle
in feloshipe / *and* pilgremes were thei alle
that toward Caunt*er*bury wolde ryde

the chambres *and* stablis weren wyde
and wel weren eased at the beste
and shortly whan the sonne was to reste
so hadde I spokyn / with hem euerychon
that I was of here felashipe anon
and made forward erly for to ryse [Arch. Seld. B. 14, leaf 1, back.
to take oure wey / there as I yow devise
but nertheles while I haue tyme *and* space
or that I ferther in this tale pace
me thynketh it accordant to reson
to telle yow al the condicion
of ech of hem so as it semed me
and which they were *and* of what degre
and eke in what array that thei were inne
and at a knyght than wol I first bigynne
A knyght ther was *and* that a worthi man ¶ A knyght.
that fro the tyme / that he first bigan
to riden owt / he loued chyualrie
trouth *and* honour / fredom *and* curtesie
ful worthi was he / in his lordis werre
and ther-to had he riden / no man ferre
as wel in cristendom / as in hethenesse
and euere honoured / for his worthynesse
At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne
ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
aboven alle nacions in Pruce
in Lectow hadde he reysed *and* in Ruce
no cristenman / so ofte of his degre
in Garnade at the sege eke hadde he be
of Algezire *and* riden in Belmarye
at Lyeis was he *and* at Satalye
whan thei were wonne *and* in the grete see
at many a noble arme hadde he be
at mortal batailles had he ben fiftene
and foughten for our feith at Tramessene
in listes thries *and* ay slayn his foo

ayeyne another hethen in Turkye
and euere-more he had a souerayne prys
and though that he was worthy he was wys 68
and of his port as meke as is a mayde [MS. Arch. Seld. B. 14, lf 2.]
he neuere yit no vilonye ne saide
in al his liff / vn to manere wight
he was a verry perfit gentill knight 72
ffor to telle 30w of his array [*The Corpus MS. begins here*]
His hors were goode but he was not gay
Of fustion he wered a gepon
Al bismotered with his haburgon 76
ffor he was late y-come from his viage
And wente for to don his pilgrimage
Wip him per was his sone a 3ong squier
A louyere and a lusty bacheler 80
Wip lockes crulle as pei were leyd in presse
Of .xx. 3eer of age he was I gesse
Of his statuture (*sic*) he was of euene lengpe
And wonderly deliuere and gret of strengpe 84
And he hadde be somtyme in Chiuachie
In flaundres in artoys and Pykardie
and born him wel as of so litel space
In hope to stonden in his lady grace 88
Embroyded was he as it were a mede
All ful of freissche floures white and reede
Synging he was or floytynge al pe day
He was als freissch as is pe monp of may 92
Schort was his gowne wip sleeues longe and wyde
Wel coupe he sitte on an hors and faire ride
He coupe songes make and wel endite
Iuste and eek daunce *and* wel purteray *and* write 96
So hote he loued pat by nighter tale
He sleep nomore pan dop a nightyngale
Courteys he was lowly and seruisable

and karf biforn his fader atte table
A ȝeman hadde he and *ser*uantes namo
At þat time for him liste ride so
And he was clad in coote and hood of greene
A scheef of pocok arwes bright *and* keene
Vnder his belt he bar ful þriftily
Wel coupe he dresse his takel ȝimanly
His arwes drouped nought wiþ fetheres lowe
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe
A not-hed hadde he wiþ a brown visage [leaf 2, back]
Of woode-craft wel coupe he al þe vsage
Vpon his arm he bar a gay bracer
And by his syde a swerd and a bocler
And on þat oþer side a gay daggere
Harnaysed wel and scharp as point of spere
A *Christo*phre on his brest of seluer schene
An horn he bar þe bawdrik was of grene
A foster was he soþly as I gesse
Ther was also a Nonne a Prioresse
That of hir smyling was ful symple a[nd] coy
Hir gretest oþ was but by seint loy
And she was cleped ma dame Englentyne
Ful wel sche song þe seruise diuine
Entuned in hir nose ful semely
And frenssch sche spak ful faire and fetisly
After þe scole of stratford atte Bowe
For frenssh of Parys was to hire vnknowe
At meete wel I-taught was sche wiþ-all
Sche leet no morsell from hire lippes falle
Ne wete hire fyngres in hir sauce deepe
Wel coupe sche carie a morsel and wel keepe /
That no drope ne fell vpon hir breste
In Curtesye was sette ful moche hire leste
Hir ouer lippe wyped sche so cleene
That in hir cuppe þer was no ferthing seene
Of grete whan sche dronken hadde hir draughte

fful semely after hir mete sche raughte
And sikerly sche was of grete disporte
And ful plesant and amyable of porte
And peyned hire to counterfete chiere
Of court and to ben estatlich of maniere
And to ben holden digne of reuerence
But for to speken of hir conscience
Sche was so charitable *and* so pytous
Sche wolde weepe if pat sche sawe a mous
Kaught in a trappe if it were deed or bledde [leaf a]
Of smale houndes hadde sche pat sche fedde
With rosted fleissh or mylk or wastel brede
But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were dede
Or if men smot it with a 3erde smerte/
And al was conscience and tendre herte/
fful semelich hir wympil pynched was
Hir nose was streight hire yghen grey as glas
Hir mouth ful smal and perto softe and rede
But sikerly sche hadde a fair forhede
It was almost a spanne brood I trowe
ffor hardely sche was nought vndergrowe
fful fetys was hir cloke as I was war
Of smal coral aboute hir arm sche bar
A payre of bedes gauded al with greene
And per-on heng a broche of gold ful scheene
On which per was first writen with a crowned A.
And after. Amor vincit omnia.
Anoper Nonne with hir hadde sche /
That was hir Chapelleyne and prestes pre
A Monk per was a fair for pe maistrie
And out Ridere pat loued venerie
A manly man to ben an abbot able /
fful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable /
And whan he rood men might his brydel heere
Gynglyng in a whistlyng wynd as cleere
And eek as lowde as doþ pe chapel belle

Ther as þis lord was keper of' þe selle
The Reule of' sent Maure or of seint' Beneit'
By-cause þat' it was old and somdel streit'
This ilke monk' leet' olde þinges pace
And held after þe newe world þe space
He 3af' nought' of' þe text' a pulled hen
That' seith þat' hunters be nought' holy men
Ne þat' a monk' whan he is recheles
Is likned til a fyssh þat' is waterles
This is, to seie a monk' out' of' his cloystre [leaf 3, back]
But' þilke text' / held he not' worth an oystre /
And I seide his opinion was good
What' sholde he studie and make himselven wood
Vpon a book' alwey in cloyste to poure
Or swynke with his hondes and laboure
As austyn bit how schal þe world be serued
Lat' austyn haue his swynk' to him reserued
Ther-fore he was a prikasour aright'
Grehoundes he hadde swift' as foule in flight'
Of' prikynge and of' huntyng' for þe hare
Was alle his luste for no cost' wolde he spare
I-seigh his sleues I-purfiled at' þe hond
With grys and þat' þe fynest' of' a lond
And for to festne his hood vnder þe chynne
He hadde of' gold wrought a ful curious pynne/
A loue knotte in þe gretter ende þer was/
His heed was balled þat' schon as eny glas
And eek' his face as he hadde ben anoynt'
He was a lord ful fatt' and in good poynt'
His eyghen stepe and rollyng' in his hede
That' stemed as a forneys of' a lede
His bootes souple his hors in gret' estate
Now certeinly he was a fair prelate
He was nat' pale as a forpyned goost'
A fat' swan loued he best' of any rost'
His palfray was as brown as is a berie

e þer was a wantoñ and a merye
itour a ful solempne man
þe ordres foure is non þat can
chil of daliance *and* fair langage
hadde made ful many a mariage
onge wo*m*men at his owne cost
o his ordre he was a noble post
wel biloued and famulier was he
þ frankeleyns ouer al in his contre
wiþ worþi wo*m*men of þe toun
hadde power of confessioun
de himself more þan a curat
his ordre he was licenciat
vetly herde he confessioñ
plesant was his absolucioñ
was an esy man to ȝiue penau*n*ce
r as he wiste to haue a good pitaunce
vnto a pouer ordre for to ȝiue
signe þat a man is wel I-schriue
r if he ȝaf he dorste make auant
e wiste þat / a man was repentant
or many a man so hard is of his herte
e may nought wepe al-þough him sore smerte
her-fore in stede of weepyng and preyeres
en mote ȝeue siluer to þe pouere freeres
is typet was ay farsed ful of knyfes
d pynnes for to ȝiue faire wyues
certeynly he hadde a mery note /
coupe he synge *and* playen on a rote
eddynges he bar witterly þe pris
nekke whit / was as þe flour delys
-to he was strong as a Champioun
knew þe tauernes wel in euery toun
euerich hostiller *and* tapst
ban a lazar or a Beggere
nto such a worþi man as he

Acorded nought' as by his faculte
To haue with such sek' lazer aqueintance
It is nought' honest' it' may nought' auaunce
ffor to delen with such poraile
But' aff with Riche and sellere of' vitaille
And ouer al þer as profyt scholde arise
Curtays he was and lowly of' seruise
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous
He was þe beste begger in his hous
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
ffor þough a widewe hadde nought' a scho
So plesant' was his In principio
Yet wolde he haue a ferþing' or he wente
His purchas was wel bettre þan his rente
And rage he couþe right' as it were a whelpe /
In louedayes þer couþe he moche helpe /
ffor þer he was not' lich a cloysterer
With a thred-bare cope as a pore scoler
But' he was lik' a maister or a pope
Of' double worstede was his semy-cope /
That' rounded as a belle on the presse
Somwhat' he lipsed for his wantounesse
To make his englissh sweete vpon his tonge
And in his harpyng' whan þat' he hadde songe /
His yghen twyncled in his heed aright'
As don þe sterres in þe frosty night'
This worþi lymitour was cleped huberd
A marchant' was þer with a forked berd
In mottle and heigh on horse he satte
Vp-on his heued a fflaundrissh beuer hatte
His bootes clapsed faire and fetysly
His resons he spak' ful solempnely
Sowyng' alwey þe encres of' his wynnynge
He wolde þe see were kept' for eny þinge
Bi-t'ixe Middelburgh and Orewelle

Wel couþe he in eschaunge scheldes selle /
This worþy man ful wel his witte bisette
Ther wiste no wight' that' he was in dette 280
So statly was he of' his gouernance
With his bargaynes and his cheuissance
ffor soþe he was a worþi man with-all
But' soþly to sein I not' how men him call 284
A Clerk' þer was of' Oxenford also
That' vnto logyk' hadde long' I-go
As lene was his hors as is a rake
And he nas not' right' fat' I vndertake 288
But loked holwe and þer-to soburly (leaf 5)
fful þredbare was his ouereste courtepy
ffor he had geten him no benifice
Ne was so worldly for to haue office 292
ffor him was leuer to haue at' his bed hede
Twenty bookes clad in blak' and rede
Of Aristotle and his philosophie
Than robes riche or fithel or gay Sautrie / 296
But' al by þat' he was a philosophre
ȝit' had he but' a litel gold in cofre
But' al þat' he might' of' his frendes hente /
On bokes and on lernyng' he it / spente 300
And besily gan for þe soules preye
Of hem þat' ȝaf' him wher-with to scoleye
Of' studie took' he most' cure and most' heede
Nought' o word spak' he more þan was neede 304
[illegible] seyd in forme and reuerence
[illegible] quyk' and ful of' [illegible]
[illegible] vertu[illegible]
308
40
312

Iustice he was ful often in assise
By patent' and by plein commission
ffor his science and for his heigh renoun 31
Of' fees and robes had he many oon
So gret' a purchaceour was nowher non
Al was fee simple to him in effecte
His purchasynge might' not' ben infecte 320
No wher so besy a man as he þer nas
And 3it' he semed bisiere þan he was
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That' from þe tyme of' king' William were falle 324
Ther-to he couþe endite *and* make a þink' [leaf 5, back]
Ther couþe no wight' pynche at' his writynk'
And euery statut' couþe he plein by Rote
He rood but' homly in a medly coote 328
Gert' with a seint' of silk'. wiþ barres smale /
Of' his array telle I no lenger tale
A ffrankeleyn was in his compaignie
Whit' was his berd as is the dayessye 332
Of' his complexioun he was sanguyne
Wel loued he by þe morwe a sop in wyne
To lyuen in delit' euer was his wone /
ffor he was Opiournes owne sone 336
That' held opinioun þat' plein delite
Was verrey felicite parfite
An houshalder and þat' a gret' was he
Seint' Iulian he was in his contre 340
His breed h[illegible]e was alweys after oon
A h[illegible] was neuer noon
Wi[illegible] his hous
Of' [illegible]
It' s[illegible]
Of' al[illegible]
After [illegible]
So cha[illegible]
ful ma[illegible]

And many a brem and many a luce in stuwe
Wo was his cooke but his sauce were
Poynant and scharp and redy all his gere
His table dormant. in his halle alway
Stod redy couered all the longe day.
At Sessions per was he lord and sire
ffull ofte tyme he was knight of pe schire
An anelas and a gisper al of silke
Heng at his girdel whit as morne mylke
A scherref had he ben and a comptour
Was nowher such a worpi vauasour
An haburdaissher and a Carpenter [leaf 6]
A Webbe a Dyer and a Tapecer
And pei were cloped alle in oo liuere
Of a solempne and a gret ~~fraternite~~
ffull freissch and newe here gere a-piked was
Here knyfes nere chaped nought wip bras
But all wip siluer wrought full clene and wel
Here gerdles and here pouches eueridel
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys
Euerich for pe wisdom pat he can
Was schaply for to ben an Alderman
ffor Catell hadde pei ynough and rente
And eek here wyues wolde it wel assente
And elles certein pei were to blame
It is ful fair to be cleped ma dame
And gon to vigilies al bifore
And haue a mantel rialliche / bore
A Cook pei hadde wip hem for pe nones
To boyle pe chikenes with pe maryebones
And poudre marchant tart and gallyngale
Wel kowde he know a draught of londoñ ale /
He coupe rost and sepe and broile and frie
Maken mortreux and wel bake a pye
But gret harm was it as it poughte me

That' on his schyne a mormal hadde he
ffor blank-manger þat made he wiþ þe beste /
A schipman was þer wonyng' fer by weste
ffor ought' I wot' he was of' Dertemouthe
He rood vpon a rouncy as he couþe
In a gowne of' faldyng' to þe knee /
A dagger hangyng' in a lace hadde he /
Aboute his nekke vnder his arm a-doun
The hoote somer had mad his hiew al brou*n*
And certeinly he was a good felawe
fful many a draught' of' wyn he hadde drawe
ffrom Burdeaux warde whil þe chapmen sleepe [leaf 6, back]
Of nyce conscience took' he no keepe
If' þat' he faught' and had þe heigher honde
By water he sent' hem hom to euery londe
But' of' his craft' to riken wel his tydes
His stremes and his daunger him besydes
His herberwe and his moone and his ledmannage
Ther was non such from hulle to kartage
Hardy he was and wys to vndurtake
With many a tempest' had his berd be schake
He knew alle þe hauenes as they were
ffra Gotlond to þe Cape de fynystere
And euery Cryke in Bretaigne and in Spaigne
His barge y-cleped was þe Mawdeleyne
With vs þer was a Doctour of' Phisike
In al þis world ne was þer non him like
To speke of' Phisik' and of' Surgerie
ffor he was grounded in astronomie
He kept' his pacient' a ful gret' del
In houres by his magiq*ue* naturel
Wel couþe he fortune the ascendent'
Of' his ymages for his pacient
He knewe þe cause of' euery maladie /
Were it' of hoot' of' cold or moist' or drie /
And wher engendred and of what' humour

He was a verray *par*fit' practisour
The cause I-knowe and of' his harm þe rote /
Anon he ȝaf' þe sike man his bote
fful redy had he his appotecaries
To sende hem drugges and his letuaries
ffor ech of' hem made oþer for to wynne
Here fremischip nas nat / newe for to gynne /
Wel knew he þe olde Escalapius
And discorides and eke Rusus
Olde ypocras haly and Galien
Serapion Razie and auyzen
Auerois damascien and Constantine [leaf 7]
Bernard and Gatisdene and Gilbertine
Of' his diete mesurable was he
ffor it' was of' no super*fluite*
But' of' gret norisshing' and digestible
His studie was but litel on the bible
In sangweyn and in pers he clad was al'
Lyned wiþ Taffata and with Sendal
And yet' he was but' esy of dispense
He kepte þat' he wan in Pestilence
ffor gold in phisiq*ue* is accordial
Ther-fore he loued gold in special
A good wif' þer was of' by-syde bathe
But' sche was somdel def' and þat' was skaþe
Of' cloþ-makyng' sche hadde such an haunte
Sche passed hem of' ypres and of' Gaunte
In al þe parissche wif' ne was þer noon
þat' to þe offryng' toforn hire schulde gon
And if' þer dede certein wroþ was sche
That' sche was oute of' alle charite /
Hire couerchiefs ful fyne were of' grounde
I dorste swere þei weyeden ten pounde /
That' on a soneday weren vpon hir hede
Hire hosen weren of' fyn scarlet' reede
fful streyt' yteyed and schoos ful moyste and newe

Bolde was hir face and fair and reed of hewe
Sche was a worþi wo*m*man al hir lyue
Housbondes atte chirche dore sche hadde fyue
Wiþouten oþer companye in ȝouþe
But þer-of needeþ nought to speke as nouþe
And þries hadde sche ben at Ier*usa*lem
Sche hadde passed many a strange strem
At Rome sche hadde ben and at Boloigne
In Galice at saint Iame and at Coloigne
Sche couþe moche of wandring by þe weye
Gat toþed was sche soþly for to seye
Vpon an ambler esely sche satte [leaf 7, back]
I-wympled wel and on hir heed an hatte
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe
A fote-mantell abouten hir hipes large /
And on hire feet a paire of spores scharpe
In felaschipe wel couþe sche laughe and carpe
Of remedies of loue sche knew p*ar* chaunce /
ffor sche couþe of þat art þe colde daunce
A good man was þer of religio*un*
And was a poure p*er*soñ of a toun
But riche he was of holy þought and werk
He was also a lerned man and a clerk
That cristes gospell trewly wolde preche
His p*ar*isshiens deuoutly wolde he teche
Benigne he was and wonder diligent
And in aduersite ful pacient
and swich he was preued ofte siþes
fful loþ were him to cursen for his tyþes /
But raþer wolde he yeuen out of doute
Vnto his poure parisshens aboute
Of his offryng and of his substance
He couþe in litel þing haue suffisance
Wyd was his parisshe and houses fer a-sondre
But he ne lefte nought for rayn ne þondre
In seknesse nor in meschief to visite

The ferreste in his parisshe moche and lite
Vpon his feet and in his hond a staf
This noble ensample to his scheep he yaf
That ferst he wrought and aftirward he taughte
Out of þe gospel he þo wordes caughte
And þis fugure he addede eek / þer-to
That if gold ruste what schal Iren do
ffor if a prest be foul on whom we truste
No wonder is a lewed man to Ruste
And schame it is if a prest take kepe
A schiten schepperde and a clene schepe
Wel ought a prest ensample for to ȝyue [leaf 8]
By his clennes how þat his scheep schulde lyue
He sette nought his benefice to hire
And leet his scheep acombred in þe myre
And ran to londoñ vnto Seinte Poules
To seeke him a Chaunterie for soules
Or with a breþerede for to be with-holde /
But duelte at hom and kepte wel his folde
So þat þe wolf ne made it not miscarie
He was a schepperde and not a mercenarie
And þough he holy were and vertuous
He was nought to synful men dispitous
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne
But in his teching discret and benigne
To drawe folk to heuen by fairnesse
By good ensample þis was his bisynesse /
But it were ony persone obstinat
What so he were of heigh or low estat
Him wolde he snebbe scharply for þe nones
A bettre prest I trowe þat nowher non es
He waited after no pompe *and* reuerence
Ne maked him a spiced conscience
But cristes lore and his apostles twelue
He taught but ferst he folwed in himselue /
With him þer was a plowman was his broþer

That hadde I-ladde of dong ful many a foþer
A trewe swynker and a good was he
Lyuyng in pees and *parfit* charite
God loued he best wiþ alle his herte
At alle tymes þough him gamed or smerte
And þan his Neighebore right as him selue
He wolde þressche and þerto dike *and* delue
ffor cristes sake for euery pouere wight
Wiþouten hire if it lay in his might
His tiþes payed he ful fair and well
Boþe of his *pro*pre swynk and his catell
In a Tabbard he rood vpon a mere [leaf 8, back]
Ther was also a Reeue and a Mellere /
A Sompno*ur* and a Pardoner also
A Maunciple *and* my self þer nare no mo /
The meller was a stout carl for þe nones
fful big he was of brawn and eek of bones
That proued wel for ouer al þar he cam
Atte wrastlyng he wold haue awey þe ram
He was schorl schuldred a þikke knarre
The was no dore þat he nolde heue of harre
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heede
His berd as eny sowe or eny fox was reede
And þerto brod as þough it were a spade /
Vpon þe cop right of his nose he hade
A wert and þer-on stood a tuft of heeres
Reed as the berstles of a sowes Eres /
Hise nose-þrilles blake weren and wide
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde
His mouþ as gret was as a gret fourneys
He was a Iangler and a goliardeys
And þat was most of synne and harlotries
Wel couþe he stele corn and tolle þriès
And 3it he hadde a þombe of gold parde :
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he
A Baggepipe wel couþe he blowe and soun

And þer-with-al he brought vs out of toun
A gentil maunciple was þer of a temple /
Of which achatours mighte take exsemple /
ffor to ben wyse in byeng of vitaile
ffor whe þer þat he paied or took by taile
Algate he wayted so in his achate
That he was ay biforn and in good estate /
Now is not þat of god a ful fair grace
That such a lewed mannes witt schal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lernede men
Of maistres hadde mo þan þries ten
That were of lawe expert and curious [leaf 9]
Of which þer was a dosein in thāt hous
Worþi to ben Stywardes of Rente and londe
Of any lord þat is in Ingelonde
To make him lyue by his propre good
In honour detteles but if þat he were wood
Or lyue as skarsly as him list desire
And abie for to helpen al a schire
In any cas þat mighte falle or happe
And 3it þis manciple sette here alþer cappe
The Reeue was a sclender colerik man
His berd was schaue as nygh as euer he can
His her was by his eeres ful round y-schorn
His toppe was dokked lik a prest biforn
fful longe were his legges and ful lene
I-lik a staf þer was no calf y-sene
Wel coupe he kepe a garner or a bynne
Ther was non auditour coupe on him wynne
Wel wist he by þe drought and by þe reyne
The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyne
His lordes scheep his neet his dayerie
His swyn his hors his stoor and his pulletrie
Was holly in þis Reeues gouernynge /
And by his couenant 3af þe rikenynge
Syn þat his lord was twenty 3eer of age

Ther coupe no man brynge him in arrerage
Ther nas baillif' ne herde nor oper hyne
That' he ne knew his sleight' and his covyne
They were adrad of' him as of' pe dep
His wonyng' was ful fair vpon an hep
Wip greene trees schadewed was his place
He coupe bettre pan his lord purchace
fful Riche he was astored priuely
His lord he coupe plese wel subtily
To yiue and lene him of' his oughne good
And haue a pank' and yet' a cote and hood
In 3oupe he hadde lerned a good mester [leaf 9, back]
He was a wel good wrighte a Carpenter
This reeue satte vpon a ful good stot'
That' was al pomely grey and highte scot'
A long' Surcote of' pers vpon he hadde
And by his syde he bar a rusty bladde
Of' Northfolk' was pis Reue of' which I telle
Bysyden a toun men clepen it' Baldeswelle
Tukked he was as is a frere aboute
And euer he rood pe hyndrest' of oure route
A Somynour was per with vs in pat' place
That' hadde a fyri cherubynnes face
ffor Sauseflem he was with eyghen narwe /
Als hoot' he was and leccherous as a sparwe
Wip scalled browes blak' and piled berde /
Of' his visage children weren afferde
Ther nas quyk' siluer litarge or bremston
Boras orsure ne oyle of' Tarte noon
Ne oynement' pat' wolde clense and byte
To him might' helpe of' his whelkes white
Nor of' pe knobbes sittyng' in his cheekes
Wel loued he garlik' oynons and eek' leekes
And for to drinke strong' wyn reed as blood
Than wolde he speke and crye as he were wood
And whan pat' he wel dronken hadde pe wyn

Than wold he speke no word but' latyne
A fewe termes hadde he two or þre
That' he had lerned out' of' som decre
No wonder is he herd it' al þe day
And eek' ȝe knowen it' wel how þat' a Iay
Can clepe watte as wel as can þe pope
But' who so coupe in oþer þing' him grope
Than hadde he spent' al his philosophie
Ay questio quid Iuris wolde he crye
He was a gentil harlot' and a kynde
A bettre felaw schulde men not' fynde
He wolde suffre for a quart' of wyn [leaf 10]
A good felawe to haue his concubyn
A twelf' moneth and excuse him atte fulle /
fful priuely eek' a fynch coupe he pulle /
And if' he fond owher a good felawe
He wolde techen him to han non awe
In such caas of' þe Erchedeknes curs
But' if' maȝnes soule were in his purs
ffor in his purs he scholde punyssched be
Purs is þe Erchedeknes helle seide he
But' wel I wot' he lyhede right' in dede
Of' cursyng' ought' eche gilty man him drede
ffor curs wil sle right as assoylyng' sauith
And also war him of' a Significauith
In daunger hadde he at' his owne gyse
The yonge gerles of' þe diocise
And knew here counseil and what' was al here rede
A garland hadde he sette vpon his heede
As gret' as it' were for an ale stake
A bokeler hadde he made him of' a cake /
With him þer rood a gentill pardoner
Of Rouncyuall his frend and his comper
That' streight' was comen fro þe court' of Rome
ffull lowe he song' come hider loue tome
This Somnour bar to him a stif' burdoun

Was neuer trompe of' half' so gret' a soun
This p*ar*doner hadde her as yelow as wax
But' smothe it heng' as doth a strik' of flax. 676
By ounces heng' his lokkes þat' he hadde /
And þer with he his schuldres ouer spradde
But' þinne it' lay by culpoñs on and oon
But' hood for Iolite werede he noon 680
ffor it' was trussed vp in his walet'
Him þoughte he rood al of' the newe get'
Discheuele saf' his cappe he rood al bare
Swich glaryng' yghen hadde he as an hare 684
A vernicle hadde he sewid on his cappe [leaf 10, back]
His walet' [lay] biforn him in his lappe /
Bret' ful of p*ar*doñ come*n* fro Rome al hoot
A voys he hadde as smal as a goot' 688
No berd ne hadde he ne neuer schulde haue
As smothe it was as it' ware late schaue
I trowe he were a geldyng' or a mare
But' of' his craft' fro Berwik' in to ware 692
Ne was þer such anoþer p*ar*doner
ffor in his male he hadde a pilewber
Which þat' he sayde was oure lady veyle
He seide he hadde a gobet' of þe seyle 696
That' seint' petir hadde whan þat' he wente
Vpon the see til ih*es*u crist' him hente
He hadde a Croys of' latoñ ful of' stones
And in a glas he hadde pigges boones 700
But' with þese reliqes whan þat' he fonde
A poure p*er*soñ dwellyng' vpon londe /
Vpon a day he gat' him more moneye
Than þat' þe p*er*soñ gat' in monþes tweye 704
And þus with feyned flatering' and Iapes
He made þe p*er*soñ and þe poeple his apes
But' trewely to tellen atte þe laste
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste 708
Wel couþe he rede a lessonn or a story

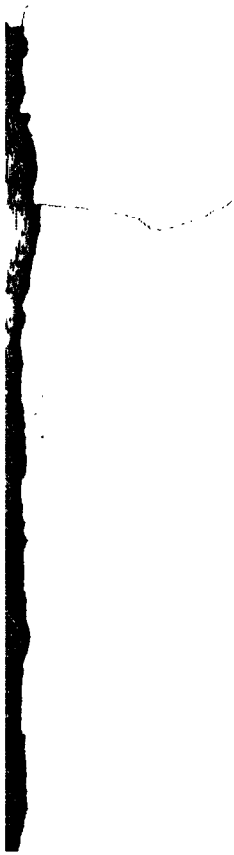
But alþer best he song an offertory
ffor wel he wiste whan þat song was songe
He moste preche and wel affile his tonge
To wynne seluer as he [right] wel cowde
Ther fore he song so meriely and lowde /
Now haue I told 3ow soþly in a clause
The estat. the array þe nombre and eeke þe cause
Whi þat assembled was þis companie
In Suthwerk at þis gentil hostelrie /
That highte þe Tabbard faste by þe belle
But now is tyme to yow for to telle /
How þat we beeren vs þat ilke night [leaf 11]
Whan we were in þat Osterie alight
And after wol I telle of oure viage
And all the remenant of our pilgrimage
But first I pray 3ow of your curtesie
The 3e ne rette it nought my vilenye
Though þat I pleinly speke in þis matere
To t[redacted]e wordes and here cheere
Ne þough I speke here wordes propurly
ffor þis 3e knowen as wel as I
Who so schal telle a tale after a man
He mot reherse as neyh as euer he can
Euerich a word if it be in his charge
Al speke he neuer so rudely and large
Or elles he moot telle his tale vntrewe
Or feyne þinges or fynde wordes newe
He may nought spare al þough he were his broþer
He moot als wel seie o word as anoþer
Crist spak himself ful brode in holy writte
And wel 3e wot no vilenye is itte
Ek Plato seith who so can him rede
The wordes mot be cosyn to þe dede
Also I preyȝe 3ow forȝiue it me
Al haue I not set folk in here degre
Heer in þis tale as þat þei scholden stonde

My witt' is schort' 3e may wel vnderstonde
Gret' cheere maad oure ost' vs eu*er*ychon
And to þe soup*er* sette he vs anon
He serued vs with vitailles atte beste
Strong' was þe wyn and wel drynken vs leste
A semly man our hoste he was with alle
ffor to ben a marchall in an halle
A large man he was with ey3en stepe
A fairer burgeys is þer non in Chepe
Bold of' his speche and wys and wel y-taught
And of' manhode him lakkede right' naught'
Ek' þer to he was right' a merie man [leaf 11, back]
And after soper pleyen he bigan
And spak' of merþe amonges oþer þinges
Whan þat' he hadde maad our rikenynges
And seide þus Now lordynges trewely
3e ben to me welcome right' hertely
ffor by my trouthe if' þat' I schal not' lye
I seyh not' þis yer so mery a companye
At' oones in þis herberw as is now
ffayn wold I don 3ou merthe wist' I how
And of' a merþe I am right' now biþought'
To don you eese and it' schal coste nought'
ye gon to Caunturbury god yow speede
The blisful martir quyte 3ou 3our meede
And wel I woot' as 3e gon by þe weye
ye schapen 3ou to talen and to pleye
ffor trewely confort' ne merþe is non
To riden by þe wey domb as a ston
And þer for wol I make you disport'
As I seide erst' and do you som confort'
And if' 3ou likeþ all by on assent'
ffor to stonden at' my Iuggement
And for to werken as I schal 3ou seie
To morwe whan 3e riden by þe weie /
Now by my fader soule þat' is deed

But' ȝe be merye I wil ȝeue ȝow myn heed
Hold vp ȝour hond wiþoute more speche /
Our counseil was not' longe for to seche /
vs þought' it' was not' worþ to make it' wys
And graunted him wiþoute more avys
And bad him seye his verdit' as him leste
Lordynges quod he / now herkneþ for þe beste
But' take it nought' I prey ȝow in disdeigne
This is þe poynt' to speke schort' and pleigne
That' ech of' ȝou to schorte with ȝour weye
In þis viage schal telle tales tweie
To Caunturbury-ward I mene it so [leaf 12]
And homward he schal tellen oþer tuo
Of' auentures þat' whilom haue bifall
And which of' yow þat' beriþ him best' of' all
That' is to sein that' telleþ in þis cas
Tales of' best' sentence and most' solas ./
Schal haue a soupér at our alþer cost
Her in þis place sittynge by þis post'
Whan þat' we comen aȝein fro Canturbury
And for to make ȝou þe more mury
I wil my seluen goodly with ȝou ryde
Right' at' myn owne cost' and be ȝour gyde
And who so wol my Iuggement wiþ seye
Schal paye al þat' we spende by þe weye
And if' ȝe vouche saf' þat' it' be so
Tel me anon wiþouten wordes moo
And I wol erly schape me þer fore
This þing' was graunted and our oþes swore
With ful glad herte and preyȝen him also
That' he wolde vouche saf' for to do so
And þat' he wolde ben our gouernour
And of' oure tales Iugge and reportour
And sette a soupér at' a certein pris
And we wiln rewled ben at' his deuys /
In heighe and lowe and þus by oon assent

We ben accorded to þe Iuggement
And þer vpon þe wyn was fet' anon
We dronken and to reste went' echon
Wiþouten eny lenger taryyng'
A morwe whan þe day bigan to spryng'
vp ros oure oost' and was our alþer cok'
And gadered vs to gider all in a flok'
And forþ we riden a litel more þan paas
vnto þe wateryng' of' seint' Thomas
And þer our oost' gan his hors areste
And seide lordes herkneþ if' you leste /
3e wot' 3our' forward and I it' 3ou recorde [leaf 12, back]
If' euynsong' and morwesong' acorde
lat' see now who schal telle þe firste tale
As euer mote I drynke wyn of' ale
Who so be rebel to my Iuggement /
Schal paie for alle that' by þe weie is spent'
Now draweþ Cut' or þat' we ferþer twynne
he which þat' haþ þe schortest' schal bigynne
¶ Sir knight' quod he my maister and my lord
Now draweþ Cut' for þat' is myn acord
Comeþ nerre quod he my lady prioresse
And 3e sir clerk' let' be 3our schamfastnesse
Ne studieþ nought' lay hond to euery man
Anon to drawe euery wight' bygan
And schortly for to tellen as it' was /
Were it' by auenture or sort' or cas
The soþ is þis the Cut' fel to þe knight'
Of' which ful bliþe and glad was euery wight'
And telle he moste his tale as it' was resoun
By forward and by composicioun
As 3e han herd what' nedeþ wordes mo
And whan þis good man saugh þat' it was so
As he þat' wys was and obedient'
To keepe his forward by his free assent
He seide siþþe I schal begynne þe game

What welcome be þe Cutte a goddes name
Now lat vs ride and herkneþ what I seye
And with þat word we riden forþ oure weye
And he bigan with right a merye cheere
His tale anon and seyde as ȝe may heere



Iam que domos patrias scitice post aspera gentis
Prelia laurigero *etc.*

Whilom was as olde stories tellen vs
Ther was a Duk' that highte Theseus /
Of' Athenes he was / lord and gouernour
And in his tyme such a Conquerour
That' grettere was non vnder þe sonne [leaf 13]
fful many a riche Contre hadde he wonne
What' with his wisdam and his chiuallerie
He conquered all' þe regne of' ffeminie
That' whilom was I-cleped Scithia
And weddede þe queen ypolita
And brought' hir hom wiþ him in his contre
With muche glorie and gret' solempnite
And eek' hir 3onge suster Emelye
And þus with victorie and with melodie
Late I þis noble duk' to Athenes ride
And all' his host' in armes him bisyde
And certes if' it nere to long' to heere
I wolde haue tolde fully þe manere
how wonnen was þe regne of ffeminie
By Theseus and by his Chiualrie
And of' the grete bataille for þe noones
Bitwixen athenes and Amazones
And how asseged was Ipolita
The faire hardy quene of' Scithia
And of' þe fest' þat' was at' hir weddyng'
And of' þe tempest' at' hir hom comyng'
But' al þat' þing' I moot' as now forbere /
I haue god wot' a large feeld to ere
And weyke ben þe oxen in my plough
The remnant' of' þe tale is long' ynough
I wol not' letten eek' noon of' þis route

[line erased here, apparently the previous one repeated.]

Lat' eu*e*ry felawe telle his tale aboute
And lat' se now who schal þe soup*er* wynne
And þer I lafte I wil a3ein bigynne
This Duk' of' whom I make mencio*un*
Whan he was comen almost' to þe toun
In all his wele and his moste pryde
He was war as he cast' his eyhe asyde
Wher þat' þer kneled in þe heighe weye
A company of' ladies tweye and tweye [leaf 13, back]
Eche after oþer cladde in cloþes blake
But' such a cry and such a woo þei make
That' in þis world is creature lyuynge
That' herde such anoþer weymentynge
And of' þis cry þey nolde neuer stente
Til þei þe Reynes of' his bridel hente
What' folk' ben 3e þat' at myn hom comynge
*Per*tourbe so my feste wiþ cryinge
Quod Theseus haue 3e so gret' enuye
Of' myn honour that' þus compleigne and crie
Or who haþ 3ou mysboden or offended
And telleþ me if' it may ben amended
And whi þat' 3e ben cloþed thus in blak
The eldest' lady of' hem alle spak'
Whan sche had swouned with a dedly cheere
That' it' was routhe for to seen and heere
¶ Sche seide lord to whom fortune haþ yiuen
Victorie and as a conquerour to lyuen
Not' greueþ ous 3oure gloire and your' honour
But' we beseke mercy and socour
Haue mercy on our woo and our distresse
Som drope of' pite þurgh þi gentilesse /
vpon vs wrecched wo*m*men let' 3e fall
ffor certes lord þer is non of' vs all
That' sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene
Now be we Caytifs as it' is wel seene
Thanked be fortune and hir false whiel

That' non estat' ensureth for to ben wel
Now certes lord to abyde 3oure presence /
Here in þis temple of' the goddesse Clemence
We haue be waytinge al þis fourte night'
Helpe vs lord siþ it' is in þy migħt'
¶ I wrecche which þat' weepe and weile þus
Was whilom wyf' of' king Cappaneus
That' starf' at' Thebes cursed be þat day
And alle we þat' ben in þis array [leaf 14]
And maken al þis lamentacioun
We losten all our housbondes at' þat' toun
Whil þat' þassege þer aboute lay
And yet' now þe olde Creon weiloway
That' lord is now of' Thebes þe Cite
fulfild' of Ire and of' Iniquite
He for despite and for his Tyrannie
To don þe deede bodies vilenye
Of' all oure lordes whiche þat' ben slawe
Haþ all þe bodies on an heep y-drawe
And wol nought' suffre hem by non assent
Neither to ben y-buried noþer y-brent
But' makeþ houndes ete hem in despyt'
And with þat' word wiþoute more respit'
Thei fellen gruf' and cryden pitously
Haue on vs wrecchede wommen som mercy
And lat' our sorwe synken in þin herte
This gentil duk' doun from his courser sterte
With herte pitous whan he herde hem speke
Him þoughte þat' his herte wolde breke
Whan he saugh hem so pite and so mate
That' whilom were of' so gret' astate
And in his armes he hem all vp hente
And hem conforteþ in ful good entente
And swor his oth as he was trewe knight'
He wolde don so ferforþly his might'
Vpon þe tyrant' hem to wreke

That' alł þe poeple of' grece scholde speke
How Creon was of' Theseus y-serued
As he þat' hadde his deþ ful wel deserued
And right' anon wiþouten more abod
His baner he displaied and forth rood
To Thebes-ward and al his host' biside
No nerre Athenes wolde he go ne ride
Ne take his ease fully half' a day
But' onward on his way þat' night' he lay [leaf 14, back]
And sente anon ypolita þe queene
And Emelye hir ȝonge suster scheene
Vnto þe toun of' Athenes to dwelle
And forþ he ritte þer nys namore to telle
The rede Statue of' Mars with spere and targe
So schineþ in his white baner large
That' alle þe feelde gliteren vp and doun
And by his baner born is his pynoun
Of' gold ful riche in which þer was y-bete
The Mynataur which þat' he wan in Grece
Thus rit' þis duk' þus rit' þis conquerour
And in his host' of Chiuallerie þe flour
Til þat' he come to Thebes and alighț'
ffaire in þe feeld þer as he þought' to fighț'
But schortly for to speken of' þis þing'
With Creon which þat' was of Thebes king'
He faughț' and slough him manly as a knighț
In pleyn bataile and putte þe folk' to flighț
And by asseut' he wan þe Cite after
And rente adoun boþe wałł and sparre and rafter
And to þe ladies he restored ageyn'
The bones of' here frendes þat' were slayn
To don obsequies as was þo þe gyse
But it were alł to longe to deuyse
The grete clamour and þe waymentyng'
That' the ladys made atte brennyng'
Of' þe bodies and þe gret' honour

That' Theseus þe noble conquerour
Doþ to þe bodies whan þei from him wente
But' schortly for to telle is myn entente
Whan þat' þis worþi duk' þis theseus
Haþ Creon slayn and wonne Thebes þus
Stille in þat' feeld he took' al night' his reste
And dide with all þe contre as him leste
To ransake in þe caas of' þe bodies deede
Hem for to streepe of' harneys and of' wede [leaf 15]
The pilours diden bysynesse and cure
After þe bataile and disconfiture
And so bifelle þat' in the caas þei founde
Thurgh̄ girt' with many a greuous blody wounde
Tuo ȝonge knightes liggynge by and by
Boþe in armes same wrought' ful richely
Of' which tuo Arcita hight' þat' oon
And þat' oþer knigh̄t' highte Palamon
Nat' fully quyk' ne fully deed þei were
But' by her cote armo*urs* and by here gere
The heraudes knewe hem self' in special
As þei þat' weren of' þe blood real
Of' Thebes and of' sustren tuo y-born
Out' of' þe caas þe pilours han hem torn
And han hem caried softe vnto þe tente
Of' Theseus and he ful sone hem sente /
To Athenes to dwellen in prisoun̄
p*er*petuelly hem nolde he not' Raunsoñ
And whan þis worþi duk' haþ þus y-don
He took' his oost' and home he rit' anon
With laurer corouned as a conquerour
And þere he lyueþ in ioye and in hono*ur*
Terme of' his lif' what' needeþ wordes mo
And in a tour in angwissh̄ and in woo.
Dwellen þis Palamon and eek' Arcite
ffor euere more þer may no gold hem quite
This passeþ ȝeer by yer and day by day

Til it fel oones in a morwe of May
That Emely þat fairer was to seene
Than is þe lilye vpon his stalke grene
And freisscher þan þe may wiþ floures newe
ffor wiþ þe rose colour strof hir hewe /
I not which was þe fairer of hem tuo
Er it were day as was hire wone to do
Sche was arisen and al redy dight
ffor May wil haue no sluggardie on night [leaf 15, back]
The seson prikeþ euery gentil herte /
And makeþ it out of his sleep to sterte
And siþen arise and don may obseruance
This makeþ Emelye to haue remembrance
To don honour to May and for to rise
I-cloþed was sche freissh for to deuyse
Hir yelow her was broyded in a tresse
By-hinde hir bak a yerde long I gesse
[illegible]d in þe gardyn atte sonne vpriste
Sche walkeþ vp and doun and as hir liste
Sche gadreth floures party whit / and reede /
To make a sotyl garland for hir heede
And as an angel heuenysshely sche song
The grete tour þat was so þikke and strong
Which of þe Castell was þe chief dongeon
Ther as þe knightes weren in prison
Of which I tolde 3ou and telle schal
Was euen ioynant to þe gardein wal
Ther as þis Emely had hir pleying
Bright was þe sonne and cler in þat mornyng
And Palamon þis woful prisoner
As was his wone by leue of his gailler
Was risen and romed in a chambre on heigh
In which he al þe noble cite seigh
And ek þe gardyn ful of branches grene
Ther as þe freisshe Emely þe schene
Was in hir walk and romed vp and doun

This sorwful prisoner this Palamoun
Goþ in þe chambre Romynge to and fro
And to himself compleignyng of his wo
That he was born ful ofte seide allas
And so byfell by auenture or caas
That þorugh a wyndow þikke of many a barre
Of yren gret and square as any sparre
He cast his eyghen vpon Emelya
And þer with al he bleynt and cryed a [leaf 16]
As þough he stongen were vnto þe herte
And with þat crye Arcite anon vp sterte /
And seide Cosyn myn what eyleþ þe
That art so pale and dedly on to se
Why crydestow who haþ þe don offence
ffor goddes loue tak al in pacience
Oure prisoun for it may non oþer be
ffortune haþ yiue vs þis aduersite
Som wicke aspect or disposicioñ
Of Saturne by som constollacioñ
Haþ 3iuen vs þis al þough we had it sworn
So stood þe heuen whan þat we ware born
We mote endure it þis is schort and playn
This Palamon answerd and seide again /
Cosyn for soþe of þis opynioñ
þou hast a vain Imaginacioñ
This prisoñ causede me nought to crie
But I was hurt right now þorugh out myn yhe
In to myn hert þat wol my bane be
The fayrnesse of þat lady þat I see
3onde in the gardyn rome to and fro
Is cause of al my crying and my wo
I not wher sche be womman or goddesse
But Venus is it soþly as I gesse
And þer with al on knees a doun he fille
And seyde Venus if it be þy wille
yow in þis gardeyn þus to transfigure

Byfore me sorwful wrecched creature
Out' of' þis prisoñ help þat' we mowe scape
And if' so be oure destenye be schape/ 1108
By eterne world to deyen in prisoñ.
Of' oure lynage haue som compassioñ
That is so lowe y-brought' by tyrannie
And with þat' word Arcite gan aspyé 1112
Wher as þis lady romed to and fro
And with þat' sight' hir beaute hurt' him so [leaf 16, back]
That if' þat' Palamon was wounded sore
Arcite is hurt' as muche as he or more/ 1116
And with a syke he seyde pitously
The freissche beaute sleþ me sodeinly
Of' hire þat' rometh in þe yonder place
And but' I haue hir mercy and hir grace 1120
That' I may seen hir atte leste wey
nam but' ded þer nys no more to sey
his Palamon whan he þis wordes herde
Dispitously he loked and answerde 1124
Wheþer seistow þis in ernest' or in pleye
Nay quod Arcite in ernest' by my feye
God helpe me so me lust' ful yuel playe
This Palamon gar kne his browes twaye 1128
It' were to þe quod he no gret honour
ffor to be fals ne for to be traytour
To me þat' am þi cosyn and þi broþer
y-sworn ful deepe and ech of' vs til oþer 1132
That' neuer for to deyen in þe payn
Til þat' þe deþ departe schal vs twayn
Neither in loue for to hinder oþer
Ne in non oþer cas my lieue broþer 1136
But' þat' þou scholdest' trewly forþer more
In euery caas and I schal forþre þe þore
This was þin oþ and myn also certeine
I wot' right' wel þou darst' it' not' wiþ-seyne 1140
Thus art' þou of' my counseil out of' doute

And now þou woldest falsly ben aboute
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
And euer schal til þat' myn herte sterue
Now certes fals Arcite þou schalt' not' so
I loued hir first' and tolde þe my wo
As to my counseil and my broþer sworn
To forthre me as I haue told biforn
ffor which þou art' y-bounden as a knight'
To helpe me if' it lay in thy might' [leaf 171
Or elles art' þou fals I dar wel sayn
This Arcite ful proudly spak' agayn
Thou schalt' quod he be raþer fals þan I
But' þou art' fals I telle þe witterly
¶ ffor paramour I loued hir first' er þou
What' wilt' þou seyn þou wist' it' nought' yit' now
Wheþer sche be a womman or goddesse
Thin is affeccioñ of' holynesse
And myn is loue as to a creature
ffor which I tolde þe myn auenture
As to my cosyn and to my broþer sworn
I pose þat' þou louedest' hire biforn
Wostow nought' wel þe olde clerkes sawe
That' who schal ȝiue a louer eny lawe ¶ Quis legem dat amantibus.
loue is a gretter lawe by my pan
Than may be yeue to eny erthly man
And þerfore positif lawe and such decree
Is broke alday for loue in eche degree
A man moot' needes loue maugre his hede
He may not' fleen hit' þough he scholde be dede
Al be sche mayde or wydow or elles wif'
And eek' it' is not' likly al þi lif'
To stonden in hir grace namore schal I
ffor wel þou wost' þi selue verreily
That' þou and I ben dampned to prisoñ
Perpetuelly vs gaigneth no Ramsoñ
We stryuen now as houndes for þe bon

They fought alday and 3et here part was non
Ther com a kyte whil þat þei were so wroþe
That bar a way þe bon bytwixe hem boþe
Ak þerfore atte kinges court my broþer
Ech man for him self þer is non oþer
Loue if þou list for I loue and ay schal
A soothly leue broþer þis is al
Her in þis prisoñ mote we endure
And euerich of vs take his auenture [leaf 17, back]
Gret was þe strif and long bitwix hem tweye
If þat I hadde leyser for to seie /
But to þis effect it happed on a day
To telle it 3ou as schortly as I may
A worþi duk þat highte Perotheus
That felawe was vnto duk Theseus
Syn þilke day þat þai were children lite
as come to Athenes his felawe to visite
nd for to pleye as he was wont to do
for in þis world he loued noman so
And he loued him als tendurly agayn
So wel þei loued as olde bokes sayn
That whan þat oon was ded soþly to telle /
his felaw went and sought him doun in helle
But of þat story list me nought to write
Duk Perotheus louede wel arcite
And had him knowe at Thebes þer be yere
And finally at request and preyere
Of Perotheus wiþoute ony Raunsoñ
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoñ
ffrely to gon wher þat him list ouer al
In such a gise as I 3ou telle schal
This was þe forward pleinly for tendite /
Bitwixe Theseus and him Arcite
That if so were þat arcite were founde /
Euer in his lif by day or night or stounde
In eny contre of þis Theseus

And he were caught' it was accorded þus
That' with a swerd he scholde leese his heed
Ther was noon oþer remedie ne reed
But' takeþ his leeue and homward he him spedde
Lat' him be war his nekke liþ to wedde
How gret' a sorwe suffreþ now arcite
The deth he feeleþ þurgh his herte smyte
He wepeþ. weyleth. crieþ pitously
To sleen himself' he wayteþ priuely [leaf 18]
He seíde allas þat' day þat' I was born
Now is my prisoñ worse þan biforn
Now is me schape eternaly to dwelle
Nought' in Purgatori but' in helle
Allas þat' euer I knew *Pe*rotheus
ffor elles hadde I haue dwelled with Theseus
I-fetered in his prisoñ eueremo
Thanne hadde I ben in blisse and not in woo
Only þe sight' of' hire whom þat' I serue
þoughꝫ þat' I neuer hire grace may deserue
Wolde haue y-suffised right' ynoughꝫ for me
¶ Oo deere Cosyn Palamon q*uo*d he
Thin is þe victorie of' þis auenture
fful blissefully in prisoñ might' þou dure
In p*ri*soun certes nay but' paradys
Wel haþ fortune torned þe þe dys
That' hast' þe sight' of' hire and I þabsence /
ffor possible is syn þou hast' hir p*re*sence
And art' a knight' a worþi and an able
That' by som caas syn fortune is chañgeable
Thou maist' somtyme to þi desir atteyne
But' I þat' am exiled and bareyne
Of' alle grace and in so gret' despeire
That' þer nys erþe water fyr ne eyre
Ne creature þat' of' hem maked is /
That' may me helpe or don confort' in þis.
Wel ought' I sterue in wanhope and distresse

ffare wel my lif' my lust' and my gladnesse
Allas why pleynen men so in comune
Of purueance of' god or of' fortune
That' ȝiueth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
Wel bet' þan þey can hemself' deuyse
Som man desireþ for to haue richesse
That' cause is of' his mordre or gret' seknesse /
And som wolde out' of' his prisoñ fain
That' in his hous is of' his meyne slain / [leaf 18, back]
Infinite harmes ben in þis matiere
We wot' not' what' þing' þat' we preyen heere /
We faren as he þat' dronken is as Mous
A dronke man wot' wel he haþ an hous
But' he not' which þe righte weie is þider
And to a dronke man þe weye is slider
And certes in þis world so faren we
We seeken fast' after felicite
But' we gon wrong' ful ofte trewely
Thus may we seyn all' and namlich I
That' wende and hadde a gret' opynioñ
That' if I mighte skapen fro prisoñ
Than hadde I ben in ioye and parfyt' hele
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele
Syn þat' I may not' seen ȝou Emelye
I am but' ded þer nys no remedye
vpon þat' oþer syde Palamon
Whan þat' he wiste þat' arcite was gon
Swich sorwe he makeþ þat' þe grete tour
Resouneþ of' his yollyng' and clamour
The pure fettres of' his schynes grete
Were of' his bittre salte teeres wete
Allas quod he arcita cosyn myn
Of' all' our strif' god wot' þe fruyt' is þin
Thou walkest' now in Thebes at' þi large
And of' my woo þou yernest' litel charge
Thou maist' syn þou hast' wisdom and manhede

Assemble all þe folk' of' oure kinrede
And make a werre so scharp on þis Cite
That' by som auenture or som tretee
Thou maist' haue hir to lady and to wif /
ffor whom þat' I most' needes leese my lif'
ffor as by weie of' possibilite
Sitthe þou art' at' þi large of' prisoñ fre
And art' a lord gret' is þin auantage .
More þan is myn þat sterue her in a kage [leaf 19]
ffor I mot' weepe and wayle whil þat' I lyue
With all þe woo þat' prisoñ may me ȝiue
And eek' with peyne þat' loue me yiueþ also
That' doubleþ al my torment' and my wo
Ther with þe fyr of gelousie vpsterte
With Inne his brest and hente him by þe herte
So woodly þat' he lik' was to byholde
The boxtre or þe asshen deed and colde
Than seide he o cruel goddes þat' gouerne
This world with bynding' of' your word eterne
And writen in þe table of' athamaunt'
youre parlement and ȝour eterne graunt'
What' is mankynde more vnto ȝou holde
Than is þe scheep þat' rouketh in þe folde
ffor slain is man right' as anoþer beeste
And dwelleþ eek' in prisoñ and in arreste
And haþ siknesse and gret aduersite
And ofte tymes gilteles parde
¶ What' gouernance is in þis prescience
That' gilteles tormenteþ Innocence
And encreseth þis is al my penaunce
That' man is bounden to his obseruaunce
ffor goddes sake to letten of' his wille
Ther as a beeste may all his lust' fulfille
And whan a beeste is ded he haþ no peyne
But' after his deth þe man mot' weepe *and* pleyne
Though in þis world he haue care and wo

Wiþouten doute it may stonden so
The answere of þis lete I to diuines
But wel I wot þat in þis world gret pyne is
Allas I see a serpent or a þeef
That many a trewe man haþ do meschief
Gon at his large and wher him list may turne
But I moot ben in prisoñ þurgh Saturne
And eek þurgh Iuno Ialous and eek wood
That haþ destroyed wel neyh al þe blood [leaf 19, back]
Of Thebes with his waste walles wide
And venus sleeþ me on þat oþer syde
ffor Ialousye and fere of him Arcite
¶ Now wil I stynte of Palamon alite
And lat him in his prisoñ stille dwelle
And of Arcite forþ I wil ȝou telle
The somer passeþ and þe nightes longe
Encresceth double wise þe peynes stronge
[illegible]oþe of þe louer and of þe prisoner
[illegible] not which haþ þe wofuller myster
ffor schortly for to sein of Palamon
Perpetuelly is dampned to prison
In cheynes and in fettres to þe ded
And arcite is exiled vp his hed
ffor euermore as out of þat contre
Ne neuer he ne schal his lady se
¶ yow louers aske I now þis questioñ
Who haþ þe wors arcite or Palamōn
That oon may seen his lady day by day
But in prisoñ moot he duellen ay
That oþer wher him list may ride or go
But seen his lady schal he neuer mo
Now diuineth as ȝou list þat ȝe can
ffor I wol telle forth as I bigan

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[*PART II. No gap in the MS.*]

Whan þat arcite to Thebes comen was
ffful ofte a day he swelte and saide allas
ffor seen his lady schal he neuere mo
And schortly to concluden al his wo
So mochel sorwe hadde neuer creature
That is or schal whil þat þe world may dure
His sleep. his mete. his drink is him by-raft
That lene he wex and drye as is a schaft
His yghen holwe grisly to biholde
His hewe falwe and pale as ayssche colde
And solitarie he was and euer allone
And waylyng al þe night makyng his mone [leaf 20]
And if he herde song or instrument
Than wolde he weepe he mighte nought be stent
So feble were his spiritz and he lowe
And chaunged so þat no man couþe knowe
His speche noþer his voys þough men it herde
And in his gere for al þe world he ferde /
Not comly lyk to louers maladye
Of heres but raþer lik manye
Engendred of humour malencolik
Biforn his celle fantastik
And schortly torned was al vp and doun
Boþe habite and disposicioun
Of him þis woful louere daun arcite
What scholde I alday of his woo endite
Whan he endured hadde a ȝeer or tuo
This cruel torment and þis peyne and woo
At Thebes in his contre as I seyde
Vpon a night in sleep as he him leyde
Him þoughte þat þe wengede god mercurie
Biforn him stood and bad him to be merie
His sleepy ȝerde in honde he bar vpright
An hatte he wered vppon his heeres bright

Arrayed was þis god as he took' keepe
As he was whan þat' argus took' his sleepe
And seyde him þus to Athenes schalt' þou wende
Ther is þe schapen of' þi wo an ende
And with þat' word arcite wook' and sterte
Now trewely how sore þat' me smerte
Quod he to Athenes right' now wol I fare
Ne for þe drede of' deþ schal I nought' spare
To see my lady þat' I loue and serue /
In hire presence I ne recche nou3t' to sterue /
And with þat' word he caughte a gret mirour
And saugh þat' chaunged was al his colour
And saugh his visage al in anoþer kinde
And right' anon it' ran him in his mynde [leaf 20, back]
Than siþen his face was so disfigured
Of maladie þe which he hadde endured
He mighte wel if' þat' he bar him lowe
Lyue in Athenes eueremore vnknowe /
And seen his lady wel neigh day by day
And right' anon he changed his array
And cladde him as a poure laborer
And al allone saf' oonly a squier
That' knew his priuete and al þe caas
Which was desgised pouerly as he was
To Athenes is he gon þe nexte way
And to þe courte he wente vpon a day
And atte gate he profred his seruise
To drugge and drawe what' so men wol deuise
And schortly of' þis matier for to sein
He fille in office with a chamburlein /
The which þat' was dwellyng' with Emelye
For he was wys and sone couþe aspye
Of' euery seruant' which þat' serueþ here
Wel couþe he hewen woode and water bere
For he was yong' and mighty for þe nones
And þerto he was strong' and bigge of' bones

To doon þat' eny wight' him can deuyse
A yeer or tuo he was in þis seruise
Page of' þe Chambre of' Emelye þe brighte
And Philostrat' he seyde þat he highte
¶ But' half' so wel byloued aman as he
Ne was þer neuer in court' of' his degre
He was so gentil of condicioun
That' þurgh out' al the court' was his renoun
Thei seide þat' it' were a charite
That' Theseus wolde enhaunce his degre
And putten him in worschipful seruise
Ther þat' he might' his vertu excercise
And þus withinne a while his name is spronge
Boþe of his deedes and of' his goode tonge [leaf 21]
That' Theseus haþ taken him so neere
That' of' his Chambre he made him a squiere
And gaf' him golde to mayntene his degre
And eek' men brought' him out of his contre
ffro 3eer to 3eer ful priuily his rente
But' honestly and sleighly he it spente
That' no man wondred how þat' he it hadde
And þre 3eer in þis wise his lif' he ladde
And bar him so in pees and eek' in werre
Ther was no man þat' Theseus haþ derre
And in þis blisse lete I now arcite
And speke I wol of' Palamon alite
¶ In derknesse and horrible and strong' prisoñ
This seuene 3eer haþ seten Palamoñ
fforpyned what' for woo and for distresse
Who feleth double sore and heuynesse
But' Palamon þat' loue drencheþ so /
That' wood out' of' his wit' he goþ for wo
And eek' þer to he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly not' oonly for a 3eer
Who couþe ryme in englissh propurly
His martirdom for soþe it am not' I

Ther fore I passe als lightly as I may
¶ It' felle þat' in þe seuenþe ȝer of' may
The þridde night' as olde bokes sein /
That' als þis storie telleþ more plein
Were it' by auenture or destinee
As whan a þing' is schape it schal be
That' sone after þe mydnyght' Palamon
By helpyng' of a frende brak' prisoñ
And fleþ þe cite faste as he may goo
ffor hadde yeue his gailler drunke soo
Of' a clarre maad of' a certeyn wyn
With nercotiks and opie of' Thebes fyn
That' al þat' night' þough þat' men wolde him schake
Þe gailler sleep he mighte not' awake [leaf 21, back]
And þus he fleeth as fast' as euer he may
The night' was schort' and faste by þe day
That' needes cost' he most' himseluen hyde
And til a groue faste þer bisyde
With dredful foot' þan stalkeþ Palamon
ffor schortly þis was his opinion
That' in þat' groue he wolde him hide alday
And in þe night' þan wolde he take his way
To Thebes-ward his frendes for to pray
On Theseus to helpe him to werray
And schortly ouþer he wolde leese his lif'
Or wynnen Emely to his louely wif' /
This is þeffecte and his entente playn
¶ Now wol I torne vnto arcite agayn
That' litel wiste how neih þat' was his care
Til þat' fortune hadde kaught' him in his snare
The besy larke messanger of' day
Saluеth in hir song' þe morwe gray
And fyry phebus riseþ vp so bright'
That' al þe orient laugheth of' þe light'
And with his streemes drieth in þe greues
The seluir dropes hangyng' in þe leeues

And Arcita in þe court' roial
Wiþ Theseus his squier principal
Is rysen and lokeþ on þe mery day
And for to doon his obseruance to may
Remembryng' on þe poynt' of his desir
He on his courser stertyng' as þe fir
Is riden in to þe feeldes him to pleye
Out' of þe court' were it' a myle or tweye
And to þe groue of' which þat' I ȝou tolde
By auenture his weye he gan to holde /
To maken him a garland of' þe greues
Were it' of' woodebynde or hawethorne leeues
And loude he song' aȝein þe sonne scheene
May with alle þi floures whit' and grene
Welcome be þou faire freisshe *may*
I hope þat' I som grene gete may
And from his courser with a lusty herte
In to þe groue ful hastily he sterte
And in a path he rometh vp and *doun*
Ther as by auenture of' þis Palamon
Was in a busshe þat' no man might' him see
fful sore aferd of' his deth was he
No þing' ne knewe he þat' it was arcite
God wot' he wolde haue trowed it ful lite
But' soþ is seide go sippen many ȝeeres
That' feeld haþ yhen and þe woode haþ eeres
It' is ful fair a man to bere him euene /
ffor alday meteþ men at' vnsett' steuene
fful litel woot arcite of' his felawe
That' was so neigh to herken of his sawe
ffor in þe busshe he sitteþ now ful stille
Whan þat' arcite hadde Romed all his fille
And songen al þe Roundel lustily
In to a studie he fel sodeinly
As doon þese louers in here queynte geeres
Now in þe croppe and now doun in þe breeres

1500 1504 1508 1512 1516 1520 1524 1528 1532

[leaf 23

Now vp now doun as boket' in a welle
Right' as þe friday soþly for to telle
Now it' schineþ and now it reyneþ faste
Right' so gan gery venus ouer caste 1536
The hertes of' hir' folk' right' as hire day
Is geerful right' so chaungeþ sche array
Seelde is þe fryday al þe wike y-like
¶ Whan þat' arcite hadde songe he gan to syke 1540
And sette him doun wiþouten eny more
Allas quod he þat' day þat' I was bore
How longe Iuno þurgh þi cruelte
Wiltow werreien Thebes þe Cite 1544
Allas y-brought' is to confusiõn
The blood Roial of' Cadme and Amphiõn [leaf 22, back]
Of' Cadmus which þat' was þe ferste man
That' Thebes bulț or ferst' þe toun bigan 1548
And of' þe cite first' was crouned king'
Of his lynage am I and his ofspring'
By verray ligne as of' þe stok' roiall
And now I am so caytif' and so þrall 1552
That' he þat' is my mortel enemy
I serue him as his squier pouerly
And ȝit doþ me Iuno wel more schame
for I dar nought biknowe myn owne name 1556
But þer as I was wont' to hight' arcite
Now highte I Philostrate nought' worþ a myte
Allas þou felle mars allas þou Iuno
Thus haþ your ire oure lignage al fordo 1560
Saf' only me and wrecched Palamon
That' Theseus martireþ in prisõn
And ouer al þis to slen me vtterly
Loue haþ his faire dart' so brennyngly. 1564
-stiked þurgh my trewe carful herte
That schapen was my deþ arst' þan my scherte
e sleen me with ȝour eyȝen emelye
c ben þe cause wher fore þat I dye 1568

Of' all þe remanant / of myn oþer care
Ne sette I nought' þe montance of a tare
So þat I coude don aught' to ȝoure plesance
And with þat' word he fel doun in a traunce 1572
A long' tyme and aftirward he vpsterte
This Palamon þat' þought' þat' þorugh his herte
he felte a cold swerd sodeinliche glyde
ffor yre he quok' no lenger wolde he byde 1576
And whan þat' he had herd Arcites tale
As he were wood with face deed and pale
he sterte him vp out' of' þe buskes þikke
And seide arcite false traytour wikke 158
Now art' þou hent' þat' louest' my lady so
ffor whom þat' I haue al þis peyne and wo [leaf 23
And art' my blood and to my counseil sworn
As I ful ofte haue told þe heer biforn 1584
And hast be-iaped here duk' Theseus /
And falsly chaunged hast þi name þus
I wol be ded or elles þou schalt' dye
Thou schalt' not' loue my lady Emelye 1588
But' I wol loue hire oonly and nomo
ffor I am Palamon þi mortel foo
And þough þat' I no wepene haue in þis place
But' out' of prisoun am astert' by grace 159
I drede nought' þat' ouþer þou schalt' die
Or þou ne schalt' not' louen Emelye
Chees which þou wilt' or þou schalt' not' asterte
This arcite with ful despitous herte 159
When he him knew and hadde his tale herde
As fers as a leon pulled out a swerde
And seide þus by god þa[t] sitteþ aboue
Nere it' were þat' þou art' sike and wood for loue 160
And eek' þat' þou no wepne hast' in þis place /
Thou schuldest' neuer out' of' þis groue pace
That' þou ne schuldest' deyen of' myn honde
ffor I diffie þe sewrte and þe bonde 16

Which þat' þou seist' I haue maad to þe /
What' verray fool þink' weel þat' loue is fre
And I wol loue hir maugre al þy might'
But for as moche þou art' a worþy knigħt'
And willest to derreyne hir by batayle
Haue her my trouþe to morwe I wol nought' fayle
Wiþouten wityng' of eny oþer wigħt
That' heer I wol be founden as a knigħt
And bringen herneys right' ynough for þe
And chese þe beste and left' þe worste for me
And mete and drynk' þis night' wol y bringe
[illegible]ugh for þe and cloþes for þi beddynge
[illegible]nd if' so be þat' þou my lady wynne
And sle me in þis woode þer I am Inne [leaf 23, back]
Thou mayst' wel haue þy lady as for me
This Palamon answerd I graunt' it' þe
And þus þei ben departed til a morwe
Whan ech of' hem hadde leyd his feiþ to borwe
Occupied out' of' alle charite
O regne þat' wolde no felawe haue with þe
fful soþ is seid þat' loue ne lorschipe
Wol not' his þankes haue no felaschipe
We fynde þat' of' arcite and of' Palamon
Arcite is riden anon in to þe toun
And on the morwe er it' were dayes ligħt'
fful priuely tuo herneys haþ he dight'
Boþe sufficant' and meete to darreyne
The batail in þe feld bitwix hem tweyne
And on his hors allone as he was borne
He carieth al his harneys him biforne
And in þe groue at tyme and place y-set'
This arcite and þis Palamon ben mette
To changen gan þe colour in hire face
Right' as þe hunters in þe Reigne of' trace
That' stondeþ atte gappe with a spere
Whan hunted is þe leoun or þe bere

And heereþ him come russhyng' in þe greeues
And bereþ boþe bowes and þe leeues /
And þinkeþ here comeþ my mortel enemy
Wiþoute faile he moot' be deed or I
ffor eiþer I mot' sleen him atte gappe
Or he mot' slee me if' þat' me mys happe
So ferden þei in chaungyng' of' here hewe
As fer as euerich of' hem oþer knewe /
Ther nas no good day ne no saluynge /
But' streit' wiþouten word or rehersynge /
Euerich of' hem hilp for to arme oþer
As freendly as he were his owne broþer
And after þat' wiþ scharpe speres stronge /
They foynen ech at' oþer wonder longe
Thou mightest' wene þat' þis Palamon
In his fightinge were a wood leoñ
And as a cruel tigre was areite
As wilde bores gonne þei to smyte /
That' frothen whit' as foom for ire wood
Vp to þe ancle foughte þey in here blood
And in þis wise I lete hem fightyng' dwelle
And forþ I wole of' Theseus you telle
The destenye Ministre general
That executeþ in þe world ouer al
The purueance þat' god haþ seie bifore
So strong' it is þat' þei þe world hadde it' swore
The contraire of' a þing' by ȝe or nay
ȝet' som tyme it' schal falle on a day
þat' falleþ nought' eft wiþinne a þousend ȝere
ffor certeinly oure appetites heere
Be it' of' werre or pees or hate or loue
Al is þis reuled by þe sight' aboue
This mene I now by mighty Theseus
That for to hunte is so desirous
And namly atte grete hert' in may
That' in his bedde þer daweþ him no day

[leaf 21]

That' he nys cladde and redy for to ride
Wiþ hunte and horn and houndes him besyde
ffor in his huntyng' haþ he such delit'
That' it is all his ioye and appetyt'
To ben himself' þe grete hertes bane
ffor after mars he serueth now Diane
Cler was þe day as I haue told er þis
And Theseus with alle ioye and blys
With his ypolita þe faire queene
And Emelye cloþed al in greene
On huntyng' ben þei riden really
to þe groue þat' stood ful faste by
which þer was an hert' as men him tolde
Theseus þe streighte wey haþ holde / [leaf 24, back]
to þe lannde he rideþ him ful righte
þider was þe hert' wont' to haue his flighte
d ouer a brook' and so forþ on his wey
his Duk' wol haue a cours at' him or twey
Wiþ houndes swich as þat' him list' to comaunde /
And whan þis Duk' was come vnto þe launde
vnder þe sonne he loked and anon
He was war of' arcite and Palamon
That' foughten breeme as it' were boles tuo
he brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
o hidously þat' with þe leste strook'
t' semeþ þat' it' wolde felle an ook'
ut' what' þei were noþing' he ne woot'
his duk' his courser with his spores smot'
nd at' a stert' he was betwixe hem tuo
nd pulled out a swerd and cried ho
o more vp peyne of' lesyng' of' 3our' hed
y mighty mars he schal anon be ded
hat' smyteth eny strok' þat' I may seen
t' telleþ me what' myster men 3e ben
at' ben so hardy for to fighten heere
iþoute Iuge or oþer officere

As it were in a litell liste really
¶ This Palamon answerde hastily
And seide sire what needeþ wordes mo
We haue þe deþ deserued boþe tuo
Tuo woful wrecches be we tuo caytyues
That ben encombred of oure owne lyues
And as þou art a rightful lord and Iuge
Ne 3iue us neyþer mercy ne refuge
But slee me first for seinte charite
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me
Or slee him [first] for þough þou knowest it lite
This is þi mortel fo þis is arcite
That fro þi lond is banyssched on his heede
ffor which he haþ deserued to be ded
ffor þis is he þat com vnto þi gate
And seyde þat he highte Philostrate
Thus haþ he Iaped þe ful many a 3eere /
And þou hast maked him þi cheef squiere
And þis is he þat loueþ Emelye
ffor siþ þat day is come þat I schal dye
I make pleynly my confessiõn
That I am þilke woful Palamon
That haþ þi prisoñ broke wikkedely
I am þi mortel foo *and* it am I
That loueþ so hote Emelya þe bright[e]
That I wol dye present in hir sighte
Wher fore I axe deþ and my Iuwise
But sle my felawe in þe same wise
ffor boþe haue we deserued to be slayn
¶ This worþi duk answerde anon agayn
And seide þis is a schort conclusioun
your owne mouþ be 3oure confessioun
Haþ dampned 3ou and I wol it recorde
It needeþ nought to pyne 3ou with þe corde
ye schal be ded by mighty mars þe reede
The queen anon for verrey wommanhede

Com for to wepe and so dide Emelye
And alle þe ladies of þe compaignye
Gret pite was it as it þoght hem alle
That euer such a chaunce schulde falle
ffor gentil men þei were of gret estat
And noþing but for loue was þis debat
And saugh hire bloody woundes wide and sore
And alle cryeden boþe lasse and more
Haue mercy lord vpon vs wommen alle
And on here bare knees doun þei falle
wolde haue kist his feet þer as he stood
te last aslaked was his mood
pite renneþ sone in gentil herte /
þough he first for Ire quook and sterte [leaf 25, back]
aþ considered schortly in a clause
e trespas of hem bothe and eek þe cause
d al þough þat his Ire hire gilt accused
t in his resoñ he hem boþe excused
As þus he þoughte wel þat euery man
Wil helpe himself in loue if þat he can
And eek deliuere himself out of prisoñ
And eek his herte hadde compassioñ
Of wommen for þey wepen euer in oon
And in his gentil herte he þought anon
And softe vnto himself he seide fy
pon a lord þat wol haue no mercy
ut be a leoñ boþe in word and dede /
o hem þat ben in repentance and drede
s wel as to a proud dispitous man
hat wol maintene þat he first bigan
hat lord haþ litel of discrecioñ
hat in such cas can no diuisioñ
ut weyeth pride and humblesse after oon
nd schortly whan his Ire is þus goon
gan to loken vp with eyghen light
nd spak þis same wordes al on light

¶ The god of loue a benedicite
How mighty and how gret a lord is he
Aȝeins his might þer gayneþ non obstacles
He may be cleped a god of his miracles 1788
ffor he can maken at his owne gise
Of euerich herte as þat him list deuise
lo her þis arcite and þis Palamon
That quytly were out of my prisoun 1792
And might haue lyued in Thebes rially
And witen I am here mortel enemy
And þat here deþ lith in my might also /
And ȝit haþ loue maugre here yghen tuo
Brought hem hider boþe for to deye
Now lokeþ is not þat an heih folye
¶ Who may ben a fool but if he loue
Byhold for goddes sake þat sitteþ aboue
See how þai bleede be þai not wel arrayed
Thus haþ hire lord þe god of loue y-paiȝed
Hire wages and hire fees for hire seruise
And ȝit þei wenen for to ben ful wise
That seruen loue for aught þat may bifall
But þis is ȝet þe beste game of all
That sche for wham þei haue þis iolyte
Can hem þerfore as moche thank as me
Sche woot na more of all þis hoote fare
By god þan woot a Cockow of an hare
But al moot ben assayed hoot and colde
A man moot ben a fool or ȝong or olde
I wot it by my self ful yore agon
ffor in my tyme a seruant was I on
And þerfore syn I knowe of loues peyne
And woot how sore it can a man distreyne
As he þat hath ben caught often in his laas
I you forȝiue al holly þis trespas
At þe requeste of þe queen þat kneeleþ heere
And eek of Emelye my soster deere

And ȝe schal boþe anon vnto me swere
That' neuere ȝe schal my coroune dere
Ne make werre vpon me night' ne day
But' ben my frendes in alle þat' ȝe may
I ȝou forȝiue þis trespas eue*r*y del
And þey him sworen his axing' fair and wel
And him of' lordschipe and of mercy preide
And he hem gr*a*unteþ grace and þus he seide
To speke of' riall' lynage and richesse
þough þat' sche were a queen or a princesse
Ech of' ȝou boþe is worþy douteles
To wedde whan tyme is but' naþeles
I speke as for my suster Emelye /
ffor whom ȝe haue þis strif' and Ialousie [leaf 26, back]
ȝe wite ȝourself' sche may not' wedde tuo
At' oones þough ȝe fighten eue*r*emo
That' oon of' ȝou al be him loþ or leef'
He moot' go pypen in an yuy leef'
This is to ſey sche may not' haue boþe
Al be ȝe neuer so Ialouse ne so wroþe
And for-þ I ȝou putte in þis degre
That' ech of' ȝou schal haue his destine
As him i schape and kerkneþ in what' wise
Lo heer our ende of' þat' I schal deuyse /
¶ My w' is þis for plat' conclusioñ
Wiþoute eny replicacioñ
If' þat ȝw likeþ takeþ it' for þe beste /
That' eu·ych of' ȝou schal gon wher him leste
ffrely wiouten Raunceon or daunger
And þ day fifty wykes fer ne neer
Euer' of' ȝou schal bringe an hundred knightes
Armed for þe lystes vp al rightes
Al re(to darreyne hir by bataile
And I biheete I ȝou wiþoute faile
vpon my trouþe and as I am a knight'
That wheþer of' ȝou boþe þat' haþ might'

This is to sein þat wheþer he or þou
May with his hundred as I spak of now
Sle his contrarie or out of lystes dryue
That schal I ȝiue Emelya to wyue
To whom þat fortune ȝeueþ so fair a grace
The lystes schal I maken in þis place
And god so wisly on my soule rewe
As I schal euen Iugge ben and trewe
ȝe schal non oþer eende wiþ me maken
þat on of ȝou schal ben deed or taken
And if ȝou þinkeþ þis is wel y-sayed
Sey ȝour avys and holdeþ ȝou appaied
This is ȝour ende and ȝour conclusiõn
Who lokeþ lighty now but Palamõn [leaf 27]
Who springeþ vp for ioye but arcite
Who couþe telle or who couþe it endite
The ioye þat is maked in þe place
Whan Theseus haþ don so fair a grace
But doun on knees went euery maner wight
And þonked him wiþ all here hert and might
And namely þe Thebanes ofte siþe
And þus wiþ good hope and wiþ herte bliþe
They take þeir leue and homward gon þei ride
To Thebes with olde walles wyde

[*PART III. No gap in the MS.*]

I trowe men wold it deme necligence
yf I forȝete te tellen þe dispense
Of Theseus þat goþ so busily
To maken vp þe lystes ryally
That such a noble theatre as it was
I dar wel seyn in þe world þer nas
The circuite a Mile was aboute
Walled of stoon and diched al wiþoute
Round was þe schap in maner of compas

fful of degrees þe heighte of sixty paas
Than whan a man was sette on oo degre
He lettede nought his felawe for to see
Estward þer stood a gate of marbel white
Westward right south anoþer in opposite
And schortly to conclude such a place
Was non in erþe as in so litel a space
ffor in þe lond þer nas no crafty man
That Geometrie or ars metrike can
Ne purtreiour ne keruer of ymages
That Theseus ne gain him mete *and* wages
The Teatre for to make and deuyse
And for to don his rite and sacrifise
he estward hath vpon þe gate aboue
In worschip of Venus þe goddesse of loue
Don make an auter and an oratorie
And of þe westward in memorie [leaf 27, back]
Of Mars he maked hath right such anoþer
That coste largely of gold a foþer
And northward in a toret on þe walle
Of alabastre whit and reed coralle
An oratori riche for to see
In worschip of Diane of chastite
hath Theseus don wrought in noble wise
But yit hadde I forgetyn to deuyse
þe noble peyntyng and þe purtraitures
The schap þe contienance and þe figures
That weren in þise oratories þre
fferst in þe temple of venus maist þou se
Wrought in þe walle ful pitous to biholde
The broken sleepes and þe sikes colde
þe sacred teeres and þe waymentyng
The fyre strokes of þe desyring
That loues seruantz in þis lijf enduren
The othes þat here couenantz ensuren
Plesaunt and hope desir fol-hardynesse

Beaute and youþe bauderie Richesse
Charmes and force lesynges flaterie
Dispense bysynesse and Ialousie
That' werede of' yalow of' gooldes a garlond
And a cukkow sittyng' on his hond
ffestes instrumentz karoles daunces
lust' and array and all þe circumstances
Of' loue which þat' rekned and rekene schal
By ordre were peynted on þe wal
And mo þan I can make of' mencioñ
ffor sothly al þe mont' of' Citheroñ
Ther venus haþ hir principal dwellyng'
Was schewed on þe wal in portreying'
Wiþ al þe gardyn and þe lustynesse
Nat' was forʒeten þe porter ydelnesse
Ne Narcisus þe faire of' yore agon
Ne yet' þe folie of' king' Salomon [leaf 28]
Ne ʒit' þe grete strengþe of' Hercules
Thenchauntementz of' Medea and Circes
Ne of' Turnus wiþ þe hardy fiers corrage
The riche Crysus kaytif' in seruage /
Thus may ʒe seen þat' wisdom ne richesse
Beaute ne sleighte strengþe ne hardynesse /
Ne may wiþ venus holde champartye
ffor as hire list' þe world þanne may sche gye
lo all þise folk' so kaught' were in here lace
Til þei for woo ful ofte seyde allase
Suffiseth here ensamples oon or tuo
And þough I couþe rekne a þousand mo
The statue of' venus glorious for to see
Was inaked fleetyng' in þe large see
And fro þe nauel doun al couered was
Wiþ wawes greene and bright' as eny glas
O citole in hir right' hond hadde sche /
And on hire heed ful semely for to see
A rose garlond freissch and wel smellynge

Aboue hir heed her doufes flykerynge
Biforn hire stoode hir sone Cupido
vpon his schuldernes wenges hadde he tuo
And blynd he was as it is ofte seene /
A bowe he bar and arwes bright and keene
Whi schulde I nought as wel eek telle þe halle
The purtraiture þat was vpon þe walle /
Wiþinne þe temple of mighty mars þe reede
Al peynted was þe wal in lengþe and brede /
lik to þe eestres of þe grisly place
That highte þe grete temple of Mars in trace
In þilke colde frosty regioun
Ther as Mars haþ his soue*r*aigne mansio*un*
ffirst on þe wal was peynted a foreste
In which þer dwelled neyþer man ne beste
Wiþ knotty knarry bareyne trees olde
Of Stubbes scharpe and hidous to biholde/ [leaf 28, back]
In which þer ran a Rombel in a swough
And þought a storm schulde bresten euery bough
And dounward from an hull vnder a bente
Ther stood þe temple of mars armypotente
Wrought all of burned steel of which þentre
Was long and streyt and gastly for to see
And þer out cam a rage and such a vese
That it made all þe gates for to rese
The northerne light in atte dores schone
ffor wyndowe on þe wall ne was þer none
Thorugh which men mighte eny light discerne
The dores waren all of Atthemant eterne
ychenchalle ouertwart and endlong
Wiþ Iren towgh and for to make it strong
Euery piler þe temple to sustene
Was tonne gret of Iren bright and scheene
Ther sat I first þe derk ymagynynge
Of felonye and al þe compassynge
The cruel Ire reed as eny glede

The pykpurs and eek' þe pale drede
The smyler wiþ þe knyf' vnder þe cloke
The schepene brennyng' wiþ þe blake smoke
The tresoun of' þe morthering' in þe bedde
The open werre wiþ woundes all bibledde
Contek' wiþ bloody knyf' and scharp manace
Al ful of' schrikyng' was þat' sory place
The sleer of' himself' yet' saugh I þere
His herte hath baþed al his here
The nayl y-dryuen in þe schood on nigħt'
The colde deth wiþ mouþ gapende vpright
Amyddes of' þe temple sat' meschañce
With disconfort' and sory contenañce
yet' saugh I woodnesse laughyng' in his rage
Armed compleint / out' hees and feers outrage
The karoigne in þe busk' wiþ þrote y-korue
A þousand y-slayn and nought' of' qualme y-storue [leaf 29]
The Tiraunt' with his preye his force thraste /
The toun destroied þer was noþing' lafte
yet' saugh I brent' þe schippes hoppestereres
The hunte strangled wiþ þe wilde breeres /
The sowe freten þe child right' in þe cradel
The Cook' I-scalded for al his longe ladel
Nought' was forgeten by þe infortune of' marte /
The carter ouer-Riden wiþ his carte
vnder þe wheel ful lowe he lay a doun
Ther were also of' martis diuisioun
The barbour and þe bocher and þe smith
That' forgeþ scharpe swerdes on his stith
And all aboue depeynted in a toure
Saugh I conqueste in gret' honoure
With þe scharpe swerd ouer his heed
Hangynge by a subtyl twyned þreed
Depeynted was þe slaughtre of' Iulius
Of' grete Nero and of' Anthonius
Al be þat' ilke time þei were vnborn

3et' was hire deth depeynted þer biforn
By manasyng' of' mars right' by figure
So was it' schewed right in þat' purtreiture
As is depeynted in þe sertres aboue
Who schal be slain or elles deed for loue
Sufficeþ oon ensample in stories olde
I may not' rekne hem alle þough I wolde
The statue of' mars vpon a carte stood
Armed and loked grym as he were wood
And ouer his heed þer schineþ two figures
Of' sterres þat' ben closed in scriptures
That' oon Puella þat oþer Rubeus
This god of' armes was arrayed þus
A wolf' þer stood biforn him at' his feete
Wiþ eighen reede and of' a man he eete
Wiþ subtill pensell was depeynted þis storie /
In redoutyng' of' mars and of' his glorie [leaf 29, back]
Now to þe temple of' Diane þe chaste /
As schortly as I can I wol me haste
To telle 3ou all þe discripcioun
Depeynted ben þe walles vp and doun
Of' huntyng' and of' schamefast' chastite
Ther saugh I how woful Calistope
Whan þat' Diane agreued was with here
Was torned fro a womman til a bere / ¶ Vrsa maior
And after was sche maad þe loode-sterre
þus was sche peynted I can 3ou seye no ferre
Hire sone is eek' a sterre as men may se
Ther saugh I dane torned til a tree
I mene nat' þe goddesse Diane
But' Peneus doughter which þat' highte Dane
¶ Ther saugh I accheon an herte y-maked
ffor vengance þat' he saugh Diane al naked
I saugh how þat' his houndes haue him caught'/
and frten him for þat' þei knewe him naught
yet yp[illegible]ynted was a litel forþere more /

how atthalance hounted þe wilde bore
And Meliagre and many anoþer mo
ffor which Diane wrought' him care and wo 2072
Ther saugh I many anoþer storie /
The which me list' nat' drawe to memorie /
¶ This goddesse on an hert' ful wel hiegh seet'
Wiþ smale honndes all aboute hir feet 2076
And vnder neþe hire feet' sche hadde a moone
Wexynge it was and schulde wanye soone
In gaude greene hir statue cloþed was
Wiþ bowe in honde and arwes in a caas 2080
Hir eyhen caste sche ful lowe a doun
Ther Pluto haþ his derke regioun
A wo*m*man trauaillynge was hire biforn
But' for hire childe so longe was vnborn 2084
fful pitou[s]ly lucyna gan sche calle
And seyde helpe for þou mayst' best' of all*e* [leaf 30]
Wel couþe he peynte lifly þat' it' wrought'
Wiþ many a floreyne he þe hewes bought' 2088
Now ben þise listes maad an Theseus
That' at' his grete cost' arraied thus
The temples and þe Theatres euerydel
Whan it' was don him liked wonder wel 2092
¶ But stynte I wol of' Theseus alite
And speke of' Palamon and of' arcite
The day approcheþ and hir retornynge
That' eueriche scholde an hundred knightes bring 2096
The bataille to darrayne as I ȝou tolde
And til athenes hire couenant' for to holde
Haþ eu*er*ych of' hem brought' an .C. knightes
Wel armed for þe werre at' all*e* rightes 2100
And sikerly þer trowed many a man
That' neuer siþþen þat' þe world bigan
That' for to speke of' knighthode of' here hond
As ferre as god haþ maked see or lond 2104
Nas of' so fewe so noble a companye

ffor euery wight' þat' loued chiualrie
And wolde his þankes haue a passant' name
Haþ preyed þat' he mighte ben of' þat' game
A wel was him þat' þer to chosen was /
ffor if' þer fille to morwe such a caas
ȝe knowe wel þat' euery lusty knight'
That' loueþ paramours and haþ his might'
Were it' in Ingelond or elles where
Thei wolde here þankes wilnen to be þere
To fighte for a lady benedicite
It' were a lusty sighte for to see
And right' so ferden þey with Palamon
With him þer wente knightes many on
Som wol ben armed in an habergeon
And in a brest' plate and in a light' Iepon
And some wol haue a paire plates large
And som wil haue a pruce scheld or a targe [leaf 30, back]
Som wol ben armed on his legges wel
and haue an axe and som' a mace of' steel
Ther nys no newe gyse þat' it' nas olde
Armed were þei as I haue ȝou tolde
Euerich after his opynioun
Ther maystow see comyng' wiþ Palamon
ligurge himself' þe grete king' of' trace
Blak' was his berd and manly was his face
The cercles of' his yhen in his heede
Thei gloweden bitwixe yelow and rede
And lik' a griffoñ loked he aboute
With kempe heres on his browes stoute
his lymes grete his braunes harde and strong'
his schuldernes brode his armes round and long'
And as þe gyse was in his cuntre
fful heighe vpon a chaar of' gold stood he
Wiþ foure white boles in þe trays
In stede of' cote armour ouer his harnays
Wiþ nayles yelowe and bright' as eny golde

he hadde a berskynne coleblak' for olde
his longe her was kembed byhynde his bak'
As eny rauenes feþer it' schon for blak'
A wreþe of' gold arme gret' of' huge weighte
vpon his heed sette ful of' stones brighte
Of fyne Rubies and of' Diamantz
Aboute his chaar þer wente wit' Alantz
Twenty and mo as gret as eny steere
To hunten atte leoñ or þe deere
And folwed him with mosel fast' y-bounde
Coleres of' gold and torettes filed roundc
An C. lordes hadde he in his route
Armed ful wel wiþ hertes sterne and stoute
¶ With arcita in stories as men fynde
The grete Emetreus þe king' of' Inde
vpon a steede bay trapped in steel
Couered in cloth of' gold diapred weel [leaf 31]
Com ridyng' lyk' þe god of armes mars
His cote armure was of' cloþ of' Tars
Couched with perles whit' and round and grete /
His sadel was of' brent gold newe I bete
A mantelet' vpon his schulderñ hangynge
Bret' ful of' Rubyes reede as fyr sparclynge
His crispe her lik' rynges was I-ronne
And þat' was yelow and glitering' as þe sonne
His nose was highe his eyen bright' Cytryn
His lippes rounde his colour was sanguyn
A fewe frakenes in his face y-spreynd
Betwixe yelow and somdel blak' y-meynd
And as a leoñ he his lokyng' caste
Of' fyue and twenty 3eer his age I caste
His berd was wel begonne for to springe
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge
vpon his heed he wered a laurer grene
A garland freissche and lusty for to seene
vpon his hand he bar for his deduyt'

2144 2148 2152 2156 2160 2164 2168 2172 2176

An Egle tame as eny lilie whit'
An C. lordes hadde he with him þere
Alł armed saue her heedes in al here gere
fful richely in alle maner þinges
ffor trusteþ wel þat' Dukes Erles kynges.
Were gadred in þis noble companye
ffor loue and for encrees of' chiualrie
aboute þis king' þer ran on euery part'
fful many a tame leoñ and lepart
And in þis wise þise lordes alł and some
Ben on þe soneday to þe Cite come
Aboute prime and in þe toun alighte
This Theseus þis Duk' þis worþi knighte
Whan he hadde brought' hem in to his Cite
And Inned hem euerich at' his degre /
He festeþ hem and doþ so gret' labour
To eesen hem and don hem alł honour [leaf 31, back]
That' yet' men weneþ þat' no mannes wit'
Of' non estat' ne couþe amenden it /
The mensralcye þe seruise atte feste
The grete giftes to þe meste and leste
The riche array of' Theseus Paleys
Ne who sit' ferst' ne last' vpon þe deys
What' ladies fairest' ben or best' daunsynge
Or which of' hem can best' daunsen or synge /
Ne who most' felynglik' speke of' loue
What' harkes sitten on þe perche aboue /
What' houndes liggen on þe flor adoun
Of alł þis make I now no mencioun
But' alle þeffecte þat' þinkeþ me þe beste
Now comeþ þe poynt' and herkneþ if' þou lest'
¶ The sonday night ar day bigan to springe
Whan Palamon þe larke herde synge
Al þough it / nere nought' day by houres tuo
3et' song þe larke and Palamon right' þo.
Wiþ holy herte and with an heigh corage

He ros to wenden on his pilgrimage
vnto þe blisful Citharea benigne
I mene Venus honorable and digne
And in here houre he walkeþ forþ a paas
vnto þe lystes þer hire temple was
And doun he kneleþ and wiþ humble chere
And herte sore he seyde as 3e schal heere
¶ ffairest' of' faire O lady myn Venus
Doughter to Ioue and spouse to Vulcanus
Thou glader of' þe mount' of Citheroñ
ffor þilke loue þou haddest' to adoñ
Haue pite of' my bittre teeres smerte /
and tak' myn humble preier at' þin herte
Allas I ne haue no langage to telle /
Theffectes ne þe torment of' myn helle
Myn herte may myn harmes nought' bewreye
I am so confuse þat' I can not' seye [leaf 32]
But' mercy lady bright' þat' knowest' wele
My þought' and seest' what' harmes þat' I feele
Considere al þis and rewe vpon my soore
As wisly as I schal for euermore
Emforth my myght' þi trewe seruañt' be
And holden werre alwey wiþ chastite
That' I make myn avow so 3e me helpe
I keepe nought' of' armes for to yelpe
Ne I ne axe nought' to morwe to haue victorie
Ne renoun in þis caas ne veine glorie
Of' pris of' armes blowen vp and doun
But' I wolde haue fully possessioun
Of' emelye and dye in þi seruise
ffynde yow þe maner how and in what' wise
I recche nat' but it' may bettre be
To haue victorie of hem or þei of' me
So þat' I may haue my lady in myn armes
ffor þough so be þat' mars is god of' armes
youre vertue is so gret' in heuen aboue

That' if' yow list' I schal wel haue my loue
Thy temple wil I worschipe euermo
An on þin auter wher I ride or go
I wil don sacrifice and feeres beete
And if' ȝe wol not' so my lady sweete
Than pray I þe to morwe with a spere
þat' arcite me þurgh þe herte bere
Than rekke I nat' whan I haue lost' my lyf'
þough þat' arcite wynne hir to his wyf
This is þeffect' and ende of' my preyere
yif' me my loue þou blisful lady deere
Whan þe orisoñ was don of' Palamon
his sacrifise he dide and þat' anon
fful pitously wiþ alle circumstances
Al telle I not' as now his obseruances
But atte laste þe Statue of' Venus schook'
And made a signe wherby þat' he took' [leaf 32, back]
That' his prayer accepted was þat day
ffor þough þe signe schewed a delay
ȝit' wist' he weel þat' graunted was his boone
And with glad herte he went him home ful soone
The þridde hour inequal þat' Palamon
Bigan to venus temple for to gon
vp roos þe sonne and vp roos Emelye
And to þe temple of' Diane gan hye
Hir maydenes þat' þider with hir ladde
fful redily with hem þe fyr þey hadde
Thencens þe clopes and þe remenant all
That' to þe sacrifice longen schall
The hornes full of methe as was þe gise
Ther lacked nat' to do hir sacrifise
Smokyng' þe temple ful of' clopes faire
This Emelye with herte debonaire
Hire body [wessh] with þe water of' a welle
But' how sche dide hire rite I dar not' telle
But' it be eny þing' in general

And ȝit' it' were a game to here it' al
To him that' meneþ wel it nere no charge
But' it is good a man be at' his large
hire brighte heer was kempt' vntressed al
A Corone of' a grene oke Serial
vpon hire heed set' ful faire and mete
Tuo fyres on þe auter gan sche beete
And dede hire þinges as men may biholde
In Stace of' Thebes and þise bookes olde
Whan kyndled was þe fyr wiþ pitous cheere
vnto Diane sche spak' as ȝe may heere
O chaste goddesse of' þe woodes greene
To whom boþe heuen and erþe and see is seene
Queen of' þe regne of' Pluto dirk' and lowe
Goddesse of' maydenes þat' myn herte hast' knowe
fful many a yeer and wost' what' I desire
As keepe me fro þi vengance and þin Ire [leaf 33]
That' attheon aboughte cruelly
Chaste goddesse wel wost' þou þat' I
Desyre to ben a mayde all my lif'
Ne neuer wol I be no loue ne wijf'
I am þou wost' ȝit' of' þy compaignie
A maiden and loue huntyng' and venerie
And for to walken in the woodes wilde
And nought' to ben a wijf' and be wiþ childe
Nought' wol I knowe compaignie of' man
Now helpe me lady siþþe ȝe may and can
ffor þe þre formes þat' þou hast' in the
And Palamon þat' haþ swich loue to me
And eek' arcite þat' loueþ me so sore
This grace I preye ȝow wiþoute more
And sende loue and pees bitwixe hem tuo
And fro me torne awey here hertes so
That' all here hoote loue and here desire
And all here besy torment' and here fire
Be queynt' or torned in anoþer place

And if so be þou wolt not do me *grace*
Or if my destyne be schape so
That I schal needes haue oon of hem tuo
As sende me him that most desireth me
Biholde goddesse of clene chastite
The bittre teeres þat on my cheekes falle
Syn þou art maiden and kep*er*e of vs alle
My maydenhode þou kepe and wel conserue
And whil I lyue a maide I wol 3ou serue
¶ The fires brennen vpo þe auter cleer
Whil Emelye was þus in hire preyer
But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynte
ffor right anon on of þe fyres queynte
And quiked agayn and after þat anon
That oþer fyr was queint and al a-gon
And as it queinte it made a whistlinge
As don þese wete brondes in here brennynge / [leaf 33, back]
And at þe brondes ende out ran anon
As it were bloody dropes many on
ffor which so sore a-gast was Emelye
That sche was ful ny mad and gan to crie
ffor sche ne wiste what it signefied
But oonly for þe feer þus haþ sche cried
And weepe þat it was pite for to heere
And þer with al Diane gan appeere
With bowe in hand right as an hunteresse
And seyde doughter stynt þin heuynesse
Among þe goddes heigh it is affermed
And by eterne word writen and confermed
Thou schalt be wedded vnto oon of þe
þat han for þe So mochel care and wo
And vnto which of hem I may not telle
ffar-wel for I ne may no lenger dwelle
The fyres which þat on myn auter brenne
Schul þe declare ar þat 3e gon henne /
Thin aventure of loue as in þis caas

And wiþ þat' word þe arwes in þe caas
Of' þe goddesse clateren faste and rynge
And forþ sche wente and made a vanysschynge
ffor which þis Emelye astoned was
And seide what' amonteþ þis allas
I putte me in þi *pro*teccioñ
Diane and in þi disposicioñ
And home sche goþ anon þe nexte weye
This is þeffecte þer nys namore to seye
The nexte hour of' mars folwynge þis
Arcite vnto þe temple walked is
Of' fiers mars to don his sacrifise
Wiþ all þe rites of' his payen wise
Wiþ pitous hert' and heigh deuocioñ
Right' þus to mars he seide his orisoñ
O stronge god þat' in þe regnes colde /
Of' trace honoured art' and lord y-holde [leaf 31]
And hast' in euery regne and euery londe
Of' armes al þe bridel in þin honde,
And hem fortunest' as þe lest' deuyse
Accepte of' me my pitous sacrifise /
If' so be þat' my youthe may deserue
And þat' I mighte be worthy for to serue
Thy godhede þat' I may ben oon of' þine
Than pray I þe to rewe vpon my pyne
ffor þilke pyne and þilke hoote fyre
In which þou whilom brendest' for desire
Whan þat' þou vsedest' þi beaute
Of' faire ȝonge freissche Venus free /
And haddest' hire in armes at' þi wille
Al þough þe oones on a tyme mysfille /
Whan Walcanus hadde caught' þe in his laas
And fond þe ligging' by his wijf' allas
ffor þilke sorwe þat' was in þin herte
Haue rouþe as wel vpon my peynes smerte
I am yong' and vnconnyng' as þou wost'

And as I trowe with loue offended moost
That euer was ony lyues creature
ffor sche þat doth me all þis woo endure
Ne recche þ neuer wher I synke or fleete
And wel I woot ar sche me mercy heete
I moot wiþ strengþe wynne hire in þe place
And wel I woot wiþoute helpe or grace
Of þe ne may my strengþe nought auaile
Than helpe me lord to morwe in my bataille
ffor þilke fyr þat whilom brente þe
As wel as þilke fir now brenneþ me
And do þat I to morwe haue victorie
Myn be þe trauaile and þin be þi glorie /
Thy souerein temple wil I most honouren
Of eny place and alwey most labouren
In þi plesance and in þi craftes stronge
And in þi temple I wil my baner honge, [leaf 34, back]
And all þe armes of my companye
And euereno vnto til þat day I dye
Eterne fire I wol byfore þe fynde
And eek to þis avow I wil me bynde
My berd myn here þat longeþ longe a doun
That neuer 3et ne felte offensioun
Of rasour nor of schere I wil þe yiue
And ben þi trewe seruant whil I liue
Now lord haue rouþe vpon my sorwes sore
If me þe victorie I axe þe namore
¶ The preyer stynte of Arcita þe stronge
The ryng̃es on the temple dore þat honge
And eek þe dores clateren ful faste,
Of which arcita somwhat him agaste
þe fyres brenden vp þe auter bright
That it gan al þe temple for to light
And sweete smel the ground anon vp yaf
And arcita anon his hand vp haf
And more encense in to þe fir he caste

With oþre rites moo and atte laste
The statut' of' mars bigan his hauberk' rynge
And with þe soun he herd a mormoringe
fful lowe *and* dym þat' seyde þis victorie
ffor which he ȝaf' to mars honour and glorie
And þus with ioye and hope wel to fare
Arcite anon vnto his Inne is fare
As fayn as foul is of' þe brighte sonne
And right' anon such strif' is bygonne
ffor þilke grauntyng' in þe heuen aboue
Bitwixe venus þe goddesse of' loue
And Mars þe sterne god armipotent
That' Iubiter was besy it to stent/
Til þat' þe pale Saturnus þe colde
That' knewe so many of' auentures olde
ffond in his olde experience an arte
That' he ful sone haþ plesed euery parte / [leaf 35]
A soþ is seyde elde haþ gret' auantage
In eelde is boþe wisdom and vsage /
Men may þe olde at' renne and nought' a-trede
Saturne anoon to stynte strif' and drede
Al be it þat' it' is agayn his kinde
Of' all þis strif' he gan remedye fynde
My deere doughter Venus q*uo*d Saturne
My cours þat' haþ so wide for to turne
Haþ more power þan wot' any man
Myn is þe drynclyng' in þe see so wan
Myn is þe prisoñ in þe derke cote
Myn is þe strañgle and hangyng' by þe þrote
The murmure and þe cherles rebellinge
The gronyng' and þe priue emp*ri*sonynge
I do vengeance and plein correccioñ
Wil I dwelle in þe signe of' þe leoñ
Myn is þe ruine of' þe hihe halles
The fallyng' of' þe toures and of' þe walles
vpon þe mynour and þe Carpenter

I sleugh Sampson schakynge þe piler
And myne ben þe maladies colde
þe derke tresons, and þe castes olde
my lokyng' is þe fader of' pestilence
Now weep namore I schal don diligence
That' Palamon þat' is þin owne knight'
Schal haue his lady as þou him bihight'
Though mars schal helpe his knight' 3et' naþeles
Betwixe 3ow þer moot' be som tyme pees
Alt be 3e nought' boþe of' oo complexiõ
That' causeþ alday swich diuisiõ
I am þin ayell redy at' þi wille
Weepe now namore I wil þi lust' fulfille
¶ Now wol I stente of' þe goddes aboue
Of' mars and of' venus goddesses of' loue
And telle yow as pleinly as I can
The grete effect' for which þat I bygan [leaf 35, back]

[*PART IV. No gap in the MS.*]

Gret' was þe feste in Athenes þat' day
And eek' þat' lusty sesoun of' þat' may
Made euery knight' to ben in such plesance
That' al þat' monday ioustne þei and daunce
And spend in heigh venus seruise
But' by þe cause þat' þai scholde rise
Erly for to seen þe grete fight
vnto here reste wente þei at night'
And on the morwe whan þat day gan springe,
Of' hors and harneys noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelleries al aboute
And to þe paleys rood þer many a route
Of' lordes vpon steedes and palfreys
Ther maystow seen diuisyng' of' harneys
So vncouth and so riche wrought' so wel
Of' goldsmythrie of' broudyng' and of' steel

þe scheelde bright' testeres and trappures
Gold hewen helmes hauberkes cote armures
lordes in paramentz on here courseres
Knightes of Retenu and eek' squieres
Nayling' þe speres and helmes boclyng'
Gydyng' of' scheldes wiþ layners lasyng'
There as neede is þei were noþing' ydel
The fomy steedes on þe goldene bridel
Gnawen and faste þe armureres also /
Wiþ file and hamer priking' to and fro /
yomen on foote and comunes many oon
Wiþ schorte staues þikke as þey may gon
Pypes trompes nakers Clariouns
That' in þe bataille blowe bloody sownes
The paleys ful of' poeples vp and doun
Here þre þere ten holdyng' here questioun
Dyuynyng' of' þise Thebane knightes tuo
Som seide þus som seide it schal be so
Som holden with him with þe blake berde
Som wiþ þe balled som with þe þikke herde [leaf 36]
Som seide he loked grym and he wold fighte
He haþ a Sparth of' xx. pound of' highte
Thus was þe halle ful of' diuinyng'
longe after þat' þe sonne gan to spring'
The grete Theseus þat' of his sleep awaked
Wiþ menstralcye and noyse þat' was maked
Heeld ȝet' þe chambres of' his paleys riche
Til þat' þe Thebane knightes boþen I-liche
Honorably weren in to þe paleys fette
Duc' Theseus is at' þe wyndow sette
Arraied right' as he were god in trone
The poepel presed þiderward fulsone /
Him for to seen and don heigh reuerence /
And eek' to herkne his heste and his sentence
An herald on a scaffold made an hoo
Til al þe noise of' þe poepul was I-doo

And whan he say þe pepul of noyse al stille
Thus schewed he þe mighty dukes wille
The lord hath of his heigh discrecioñ
Considered þat it were destruccioñ
To gentil blood to fighten in þis gise
Of mortel bataille now in þis emprise
Wher fore to schapen þat þei schal not deye
He wol his ferste purpos modifye
No man þerfore vpon peyne of his lyf
No maner schot ne pollax ne schort knyf
In to þe lystes sende or þider brynge
Ne schort swerd for to stoke with poynt bytynge
No man ne drawe ne bere it by his syde
No man schal to his felawe ride
But oo cours with a scharp y-grounde spere
ffoyne if him list on foote himself to were /
And he þat is at meschief schal be take
And nought slain but be brought vnto þe stake
That schal ben ordeyned on eyþer syde /
But þider he schal be force and þer abyde / (leaf 36, back)
And if so falle þe cheuentein be take /
On eyther syde or elles sleen his make
No lenger may þe torneyenge laste
God speede 3ou go forth and lay on faste /
Wiþ longe swerdes and 3our maces fighteþ 3our fille
Go now your wey þis is þe lordes wille
The voys of þe poeple touchede heuene
So lowde criede þei with merie steuene
God saf swich a lord þat is so good
He wilneþ no distruction of blood
Vp goþ þe trompes and þe melodye
And to þe listes ritte the compaignye
By ordinance þorugh out þe cite large
Hanged wiþ cloþ of gold and nought with Sarge /
ffull lik a lord this noble duk gan ryde
These two Thebanes vpon eyþer syde

And after roode þe queene and Emelye /
And after þat another compaignye /
Of on and oþer after here degre
And þus þey passen þurgh out þe Citee
And to þe lystes come þey be tyme
It nas nat of þe day 3et fullich prime
Whan sette was Theseus ful riche and hye
ypolita þe queen and Emelye
And oþer ladyes in degree aboute
vnto þe seetes preseþ al þe route
And westward þurgh þe gates vnder marte
Arcite and eek þe hundred of his parte
Wiþ baner reed is entred right anon
And in þat selue moment Palamon
Is vnder venus Estward in þe place
Wiþ baner whit and hardy chere and face
In al þe world to seken vp and doun
So euene wiþoute variacioun
Ther were swiche companyes tweye
ffor þer was non so wys þat couþe seie [leaf 37]
That eny hadde of oþer auantage
Of worþinesse ne of astaat ne age
So euene were þei chose for to gesse
And in to Rynges faire þei hem dresse
Whan þat here names rad were euerychon
That in here nombre gyle were þer non
Tho were þe gates schette and cryed was lowde
Do now 3our deuoir yonge knightes proude
¶ The heraudes lefte here prikyng vp and doun
Now ryngeþ trompes lowde *and* clarioun
Ther is namore to sein West and Est
In goþ þe speres ful sadly in arest
In goþ the scharpe spore in to þe syde
þer seen men who can Iustne and who can ryde
Ther schyueren schaftes vpon scheeldes þikke
He feeleþ þorugh þe herte spoon þe prikke

vp springeþ speres twenty foot' on heighte
Out' gon þe sweerdes as þe seluer brighte
The helmes þer to hewen and to schrede
Out brest' þe blood with sterne streemes reede
With mighty maces þe bones þei tobreste
he þurgh þe þikkest' on þe prong' gan preste
Ther stomblen steedes stronge and doun gon alle
he rolleþ vnder foot' as doþ a balle
he foyneþ on his foot' with his tronchoun
And he him hurteþ with his hors a doun
he þurgh þe body is hurt' and sippen take
Maugre his heed and brought' vnto þe stake
As forward was right' þer he moste abyde
Anoþer is ladde on þat oþer syde
And som tyme doþ hem Theseus to reste
hem to refreissche and drynken if' hem leste
fful ofte a-day han þise Thebanes two
Togydre ymett' and wrought' his felawe wo
vnhorsed haþ ech oþer of' hem tweye
Ther nas no Tygre in vale of' Galgopheie [leaf 37, back]
Whan þat' hire whelp is stole whan it is lite
So cruel on þe hunte as is Arcite
ffor Ialouse herte vpon þis Palamon
Ne in belmaryn þer nys so fel leon
That' hunted is or for his hunger wood
Ne of' his prey desireþ so þe blood
Of' Palamon to sle his foo arcite
The Ialous strokes on here helmes byte
Out' renneth blood on boþe here sydes reed
Som tyme an ende þer is of' euery deed
ffor or þe sonne vnto þe reste wente
The stronge king' Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon as he faught' with arcite
And made his sweerd deepe in fleissh byte
And by þe force of' twenty is he take
vn-yolden and drawen to þe stake

And in þe rescous of' þis Palamoun
The stronge knight' ligurge is born a doun
And king' Emetreus for all his strengþe
Is born out' of' his sadell a swerdes lengthe
So hitte him Palamon or he were take
But' al for nought' he was brought' to þe stake
his hardy herte might' him helpe naught'
he moste abide whan þat' he was caught'
By force and eek' by composicioñ
Who sorweþ now but' woful Palamoñ
þat' moot' nomore gon azen to fighte
And whan þat' Theseus hadde seen þis sighte
he cried ho namore for it is doñ
Ne non schal lenger to his felaw gon
I wil be trewe Iugge and not' partie /
Arcite of' Thebes schal haue Emelye
That' by his fortune haþ hir faire y-wonne
Anon þer is a noyse of' poepel bygonne
ffor ioye of' þis so loude and heigh wiþ alle /
It' semed þat' þe lystes scholde falle [leaf 38]
¶ What' can now faire venus don aboue
What' seiþ sche now what' doþ þis queen of' loue
But' weepeþ so for wantyng' of' hir wille
Til þat' hire teeres in þe lystes fille /
Sche seyde I am aschamed douteles
Saturnus seyde doughter hold þi pees
Mars haþ his wille his knight' hath all his boone
And by myn heed þou schalt' ben eesed soone
The trompoures wiþ þe lowde menstralcye
The heraudes þat' ful lowde yelle and crye/
Ben in here wele for ioye of' daun Arcite
But' herkneþ me and stynteþ noyse alite/
Which a miracle þer bifel anon
This fiers Arcite haþ of' his helm y-doon
And on a courser for to schewe his face
He prikeþ endelong' þe large place

lokyng' vpward vpon þis Emelye
And sche again him caste a frendlich yhe
ffor wommen as to speken in comune
Thei folwen all' þe fauour of' fortune/
And was al his chier as in his herde/
Out' of' þe ground a fir Infernal sterte/
ffrom pluto sent' atte request' of' Saturne/
ffor which his hors for feere gan to turne/
And leep a syde and foundred as he leep
And ar þat' arcite may taken keep
he plight' him on þe pomel of' his heede
That' in þe place he lay as he were deede
His brest' to-brosten with his sadel bowe
As blak' he lay as any cole or crowe
So was þe blood y-ronne in his face
Anon he was born out' of' þe place
Wiþ herte soor to Theseus paleys
Tho was he coruen out' of' his harneys
And in a bed I-brought' ful fair and blyue
ffor he was yet' in memorie and a lyue / [leaf 88, back]
And alwey cryeng' after Emelye
Duc' Theseus with all' his companye/
Is comen hom to Athenes his Citee
With alle blisse and gret' solempnete
Al be it' þat' þis auenture was falle
he nolde not' disconforten hem alle
Men seyde eek' þat' arcite schal not' dye
he schal ben heled of' his maladye
And of' an[illegible]per þing' þei were as fayn
That' of' h[illegible]m alle was þer non y-slayn
Alle were þei sore hurt' and namely oon
That' with a spere was þerled his brest' boon
To oþer woundes and to broken armes
Some hadden salue *and* some hadden charmes
ffermacies of' herbes and eek' saue
Thei dro[illegible]ke for þei wolde here lyues haue

ffor which þis noble Duc' as he wel can
Conforteþ and honoureþ euery man
And makeþ reuel al þe lange night'
vnto þe straunge lordes as it' was right'
Ne þer was holden no disconfytyng'
But' as a Iustnes or a torneying'
ffor soþly þer was no disconfiture
ffor fallyng' nys but' an auenture
Ne to be ladde by force to þe stake
vnyolden and with twenty knightes take
A p*er*sone alone wiþouten mo
And haried forþ by arme foot' and too
And eek' his steede driuen forþ wiþ staues
Wiþ foot' men boþe yomen and knaues
It' was arretted him no vilanye
Ther may no man clepe it' Cowardie
ffor which anon Duk' Theseus leet' crie
To stynte alle rancour and enuye
The gree as wel of' oo syde as of' oþer
And eiþer side ylik' as oþer broþer [leaf 39]
And yaf' hem ȝiftes after here degre
and fully heeld he feste dayes þre
And conueyed þe kyn̄ges worþily
Out' of' his toun a iorney largely
And hom went' euery man þe righte way
Ther was namore but' far wel and haue good day
Of' þis bataille I wol no more endite
But' speke of' Palamon and [of] arcite
¶ Swelleþ þe brest' of Arcite and þe sore
Encreceþ at' his herte more and more
The cloþ-red blood for eny lechecraft'
Corupteþ and is in his bouk' I-laft'
Thaf' neyþer veyne blood ne ventusynge
Ne drynk' of herbes may ben his helpynge
The vertue expulsif' or animal
ffro þilke vertu cleped natural

Ne may þe venym voide ne expelle/
The pipes of his longes gan to swelle
And euery lacerte in his brest adoun
Is schent with venym and corrupcioun
Him gayneþ neyþer for to gete his lijf
vomyt vpward ne dounward laxatif
Al is to-brusten þilke regiõ
Nature haþ no dominacioñ
And certeynly þer nature wil not werche
ffare wel phisik go bere þe man to cherche /
This al and som þat arcita mot dye
ffor which he sendeth after Emelye
And Palamon þat was his cousyn deere
Than seyde he þus as ȝe schal after heere
¶ Nat may þe woful spirit in myn herte
Declare a poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To you my lady þat I loue moost
But I biqueþe þe seruice of my gost
To yow abouen euery creature /
Syn þat my lif may no lenger dure [leaf 39, back]
Allas þe woo allas þe peynes stronge /
That I for ȝou haue suffred and so longe /
Allas þe deth allas myn Emelye
Allas departyng of oure companye
Allas myn hertes queene allas my lyf
Myn hertes lady endere of my lif
What is þis world what axed men to haue
Now with with his loue now in his colde *graue*
Allone wiþouten eny companye
ffar-wel my sweete foo myn Emelye
And softe take me in ȝoure armes tweye
ffor loue of god and herkneþ what I seye
¶ I haue here with my cosyn Palamon
Hadde strif and rancour many a day agon
ffor loue of yow and for my Ialousye
And Iupiter so wis my soule gye

To speken of a seruant propurly
With circumstances alle trewely
That is to sein troupe honour and knighthede
Wisdom humblesse estat and heigh kynrede
ffredom and al pat longep to pat art
So Iuppiter haue of my soule parte
As in pis worlde right now knowe I non
So worpi to be loued as Palamon
That serueþ yow and wil don all his lijf
And if pat euere ȝe schal be a wijf
fforyete nat Palamon the gentilman
And with pat word his speche faile gan
ffor from his feet vnto his brest was come
The colde of dep pat hadde him ouercome /
And yet more ouer for in his armes tuo
The vital strengpe is lost and all ago
Oonly pe intellecte wipoute more
That dwelled in his herte sik and sore /
Gan faillen whan pe herte felte dep
Busked his yhen tuo and failed brep [leaf 40]
But on his lady ȝet cast he his yhe
His laste word was mercy Emelye
his spirit changed hous and wente pere
As I cam neuer I can nought telle where
Therfore I stynte I am no dyuinistre
Of soules fynde I nat in pat registre
Ne me ne list pilke opinions to telle
Of hem pough pat pey writen wher pei duelle
Arcite is cold pat mars his soule gye
Now wol I speke forth of Emelye
Schrighte Emelye and houlep Palamon
And Theseus his suster took anoon
Swounyng and bar hire fro pe cors away
What helpep it to tarien forp pe day
To tellen how sche weepe bope eue and morwe
ffor in such caas wommen haue such sorwe

Whan þat here housbondes ben fro hem a-go
That for þe more part þei sorwen so
Or elles fallen in swich a maladye
That atte laste certeinly þey dye
Infinite ben þe sorwes and þe teeres
Of olde folk And folk of tendre ȝeeres
In all þe toun for deþ of þis Teban
ffor him þer weepeþ boþe child and man
So gret weepynge was þer non certayn
Whan Ector was brought al fressh̄ y-slayn
To Troye allas the pite þat was þere
Cracchinge of cheekes rendynge eek of here
Whi woldestow ben deed þis wommen crye
And haddest gold ynough and Emelye
No man mighte gladen Theseus
Sauynge his olde fader Egeus
That knew þis worldes transmutacioun
As he hadde seyn it vp and doun
Ioye after woo. and woo after gladnesse
And schewetḥ hem ensample and liknesse [leaf 40, back]
Right as þer dede neuer man *quod* he
That he ne lyued in erþe in som degree /
Right so þer lyuede neuere man he seyde
In al þis world þat som tyme he ne deyde
This world is not but a þurghfare ful of wo
And we ben pilgrimes passynge to and fro
Deþ is an ende of eu*e*ry worldly sore
And ouer al þis ȝet seide he mochel more
To þis effect ful wisly to enherte
The poeple. þat þei schulde him reconforte
Duc Theseus with all his busy cure
Cast now wher þat þe Sepulture
Of good arcite may best y-maked be
And eek most honorable in his degre
And at þe last he took conclusioñ
That þer as ferst arcite and Palamoñ

hadde for loue þe bataille hem bitweene
That' in þe selue groue swete and greene
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires
his compleynt' and for loue his hoote fyres
he wolde make a fyr in which þe office
ffuneral he mighte hem aⁿ complice
he leet' anon comande to hakke and hewe
The ookes olde and leyen hem on a rewe
In culpons wel arrayed for to brenne
his officers with swifte foot' þey renne
And Ride anon at' his comandement
And after þis Theseus haþ y-sent
After a beere and it' al ouerspradde
Wiþ cloþ of' gold þe richest' þat he hadde
And of' þe same suyte he cladde arcite
vpon his hondes his gloues white
Ek' on his heed a croune of' laurer greene
And in his hond a swerd [ful] bright' and keene
he leyde him bare þe visage on þe beere
Ther with he weep that' pite was to heere
And for þe pepul scholde seen him alle
Whan it' was day he brought' him in to þe halle
That' roreþ of' þe crye and þe soun
¶ Tho com þis woful Theban Palamon
With flotery berd and ruggy asschy heeres
In cloþes blak' y-dropped al with teeres
And passyng' oþer of' weepyng' Emelye
The reufullest' of aⁿ þis companye
In as moche as þe seruice scholde bee
The more noble and riche in his degree
Duc' Theseus leet' for[þ] þre steedes bringe
That' trapped were in steel al gliterynge
And couered with þe armes of' daun arcite
vpon þese steedes greete and white
Ther seten folk' of' which on bar his scheeld
Anoþer his spere vpon his hondes heelde

[leaf 41]

The þridde bar with him his bowe turkeys
Of brent gold was þe caas and eek þe harneys
And ryden forþ a paas with sorwful cheere
Toward þe groue as ȝe schul after heere
The noblest of þe Greekes þat þer were
vpon here schuldres carieden þe beere
With slake paas and eighen reede and wete
þurghout þe Cite by þe maistre streete /
That sprad was al with blak and wonder highe
Right of þe same is þe same is þe street y-wrye
vpon þe right hond went olde Egeus
And on þat other syde duk Theseus
With vessels in here hand of gold ful fyne
As ful of hony melk and blood and wyne
Ek Palaman with ful gret compañye
And after þat com woful Emelye
With fire in honde as was þat tyme þe gyse
To do þoffice of funeral seruise
Heigh labour and ful gret apparaillyng
Was atte seruise and þe fir makyng [leaf 41, back]
That wiþ his greene top þe heuene raughte
And twenty fadme of brede þe armes straughte /
This is to seyn þe bowes were so brode
Of stree first þer was leyd many a loode
But how þe fir was maked vp on heighte
Ne eek þe names how þe trees highte
As Ok. fir. birch. asp. Alder. holm. popeler
Willow. Elm. plane. Assh. box. chesteyn lynde laurer.
Mapel. þorn. beech. hasill. ew. whipiltre
how þey were felde schal not be told for me
Ne how þe goddes ronnen vp and doun
Disherited of here habitacioun
In which þei woneden in reste and pees
Nymphes ffawnes and amadries /
Ne how þe beestes and þe briddes alle
fledden for feered whan þe woode was falle /

Ne how þe ground agast' was of' þe light'
That' was not' wont' to see þe sonne bright'
Ne how þe fyr was couched first' with stree /
And þanne with drye stockes clouen a þre
And þanne with greene woode and spicerie
And þanne with cloth of' gold and wiþ Perrye
And garlandes hangyng' with ful many a flour
The mirre þencens with al so sweete odour
Ne how arcite lay among' al þis
Ne what' richesse aboute his body is
Ne how þat' Emelye as was þe gyse
Putte in þe fyre of' funeral seruise /
Ne how sche swounede whan maad was þe fire
Ne what' sche spak' ne what' was hire desire
Ne what' Iuwels men in þe fyre cast'
Whan þat' þe fyr was greet' and brende fast'
Ne how som cast' hir scheeld and som hire spere
And of' here vestimentz whiche þat' þey were
And coppes full of' melk' and wyn and blood
Into þe fyr þat' brente as it' were wood [leaf 42]
Ne how þe Grekes with an huge route
Thries ryden al þe fir aboute
vpon þe left' hond with a bowe schotynge
And þries with here speres claterynge
And þries how þe ladyes gon to crye
Ne how þat' lad was homward Emelye
Ne how arcite is brent' to aisshes colde
Ne how þat' liche-wake was y-holde
Al þilke nyght' ne how þe greekes play
The wake-pleyes ne kepe I nought' to say
Who wrasteleþ best' naked with oyle anoynt'
Ne who þat' bar him best' in no disioynt'
I wol not' tellen alle how þey goon
hom til athenes whan þe play was don
But' schortly to þe poynt' þan wol I wende
And maken of' my longe tale an ende

¶ By proces and of lengthe of certeyn ȝeeres
Al stynt is þe mournyng and þe teeres
Of grekes by on general assent
Than semede þer was a parlement
At atthenes vpon a certein point and caas
Among þe whiche poyntes y-spoken was
To haue with certain contrees alliance
And haue fully of Thebane obeissañce
ffor which þis noble Theseus anon
leet seende after gentil Palamon
vnwist of him what was þe cause and why
But in his blake cloþes sorwfully
he com at his comandement in hye
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye
Whan þey were sette and huyst was in þe place /
An Theseus abyden haþ a space
Or eny word com fro his wise breste
his eyȝen sette he þer as was his leste /
And with a sad visage he siked stille /
And after þat right þus he seyde his wille [leaf 42, back]
The ferste maner of þe cause aboue
Whan he first maade þe faire cheine of loue
Gret was þeffect and heigh was his entente
Wel wist he why and what þer of he mente
ffor with þat faire cheyne of loue he bonde
The fyr. þe aier. the water and þe londe
In certeyn boundes þat þei may not flee /
That same prince and þat same mouer *quod* he
haþ stablissed in þis wrecchede world a-doun
Certeine daiȝs and *dominacioun*
To all þat beþ engendred in þis place
Ouer þe whiche day þay may not pace
Alle mowe þey yet þo dayes abregge
Ther needeþ nought non *auctorite* to legge
ffor it is proeued by *experience*
But þat me list to declaren my sentence /

Than may men wel by þis ordre discerne
That' þilke mouere stable is and eterne
Wel may men knowe but' it' be a foole
That' euery partie darreyned from his hoole
ffor nature haþ nat' taken his bygynnyng'
Of' no partye nor of' cantel of' a þing'
But' of' a þing' þat' parfyt' is and stable
Descendyng' so til it' be corumpable
And þerfore for his wise purueance
he haþ so wel byset' his ordinance
That' specie of' þinges and progressions
Schullen endure by successions
And nought' eterne wiþouten any lye
This maystow vnderstonden and seen at' yhe
Loo þe Ok' þat' haþ so long' a norshing'
ffro þe tyme þat' it' first' bygynneþ to spring'
And hath so long' a lijf' as ȝe may see
Yet atte laste wasted is þe tree /
Considereþ eek' how þat' þe harde ston
vnder oure foot' on which we trede and goon [leaf 43]
Yet' wasteþ it' as it' liþ by þe weye
The brode ryuer som tyme wexeþ dreye
The grete townes see we wane and wende
þan ȝe see þat' alt' þis þing' haþ ende
Of' man and woman se we wel also
That' needeth in oon of' þe termes tuo
That is to sein in ȝouþe or elles age
He moot' be deed þe king' as schal þe page
Sum in his bedd. som in þe deepe see
Som in the large feeld as ȝe may see /
Ther helpeþ nought' al goþ þat' ilke weye
Than may I sein that' al þis þing' moot' deye
What' maketh þis but' Iuppiter þe king'
That' is Prince and cause of' alle þing'
Conuertyng' alle vnto his propre wille
ffrom which it is darreyned soþ to tille

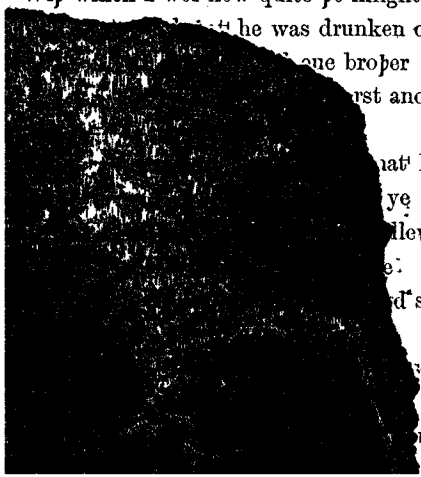
And heer agayns no creature on lyue
Of' no degree auailleþ for to stryue 3040
Thanne is it' wisdom as it' þenkeþ me
To make vertue of necessite /
And take it' wel þat' we may not' eschewe
And nameliche þat' to vs all*e* is dewe 3044
. . . . . [*No gap: line left out.*]
And rebell is to him þat' all may gye
And certeinly a man haþ most' honour
To deyen in his excellence and flour 3048
Whan he is siker of' his goode name
Than haþ he doon his freendes ne him no schame
And gladder oughte his frendes ben of' his deþ
Whan wiþ honour y-yolden is vp þe breþ 3052
Than whan his name apalled is for age
ffor al forgeten is his vessellage
Than is the beste as for a worþy fame
To deyen whan he is best' of' name 3056
The contrarie of' all*e* þis is wilfulnesse
Why grucchen we why haue we heuynesse
That' goode Arcite of' Chiuallerie þe flour [leaf 43, back]
Departed is wiþ duete and with hono*ur* 3060
Out of' [illegible] pri*s*oñ of' þis lyf'
[illegible] cosyn and his wyf'
[illegible] wel
[illegible] neuer a deel 3064
[illegible] offende /
[illegible] t amende
[illegible] rie
[illegible] 3068
[illegible]
[illegible] 3072
[illegible] ne

Suster quod he þis is my ful assent
Wiþ all̃ þauys heere of my parlement /
That gentil Palamon 3oure oughne knight
That serueth 3ou with wille and herte and might /
And euer haþ don siþen ye ferst him knewe
That 3e schull of 3our grace vpon him rewe
And taken him for housbond and for lord
Lene me your hond for þis is oure acord
Lat see now of your wommanly pite
he is a kinges broþer sone parde
And þough he were a pore Bachiller
Syn he haþ serued you so many a yeer
And had for 3ou so gret aduersite /
It moste ben considered leeueþ me
ffor gentil mercy oughte to passen right
Than seide he þus to Palamon þe knight
I trowe þer needeþ litel sermonyng
To make you assented to þis þing
Come nere and take 3oure lady by þe hond
Bitwixen hem was maad anon þe bond
That highte matrimoigne or mariage [leaf 44]
By all̃ þe counsail and þe baronage.
And þus wiþ alle blisse and melodye
Haþ Palamon y-wedded Emelye
And god þat al þis world ha
Sende him his loue þat h
ffor now is Palamon in a
Lyuyng in blisse in ric
And Emely him leueth
And he hir serueþ so
That was þer no word
Of Ialousie or ony op
Thus endeth Palamo
And god saue all̃ þi

[*no gap in the MS.*]

¶ The Millewardes tale/

Whan þat' þe knight' had þus his tale y-told
In aff' þe companye nas þer 3ong' ne old
That' he ne seyde it / was a noble storye
And worþi for to drawen in memorie
And nameliche þe gentils eu*e*rych oon)
Oure Oost' lough and swor so mot' I gon)
This goþ aright' vnbokeled is þe male/
lat' se now who schal telle anoþer tale
ffor trewely þe game is wel bygonne
Now telleþ 3e sire monk' if' 3e kunne
Somwhat' to quyte with þe knightes tale
The meller þat' for-drunken was al pale
So þat' vnneþe vpon his hors he sat'
he nolde aualen neyþer hood ne hat'
Ne abide noman for his curtesie/
But' in Pilates vois he gan to crye
And swor by armes and by blood and bones
I can a noble tale for þe nones
Wiþ which I wol now quite þe knightes tale



he was drunken of ale
ne broþer
rst anoþer [leaf 44, back]
nat' I
ye
lleweye
e
d' some
oun
ray

ffor I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Boþe of a Carpenter and of his wijf/
how þat a clerk haþ sett þe wrightes cappe
The Reeue answerde and seyde stynt þy clappe
lat be þi lewed dronken harlotrie
It is a synne and eeke gret folye
To apeiren eny man or diffame
And eek to bringe wyfes in such fame
Thou maist ynough of oþer þinges sain
This dronken meller spak ful soone agayn
And seyde leeue broþer Osewold /
Who has no wyf he is no Cokewold
But I seye nought þerfore þat þou art oon
Ther been ful goode wyfes many on
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Why art þou angry wiþ my tale now
I haue a wif *parde* as wel as þou
Yet nolde I not for þe Oxen in my plough
Take vpon me more þan ynough
As demen on my self þat I were oon
I wil bileeue þat I am noon
And housbonde schal not ben Inquysitif
Of goddes priuetees ne of his wijf
So he may fynde goddes foyson þer
Of þe remenant needeþ nou
What scholde I more say
he nolde his wordes for n
But tolde his cherles tal
Me aþinkeþ þat I schal
And þerfore euery genti
Demeþ nought for god
Of yuel entent but fo
Here tales alle be þei
Or elles falsen som
And þer-fore who so

Torne ouer þe leef and chees anoþer tale
ffor ȝe schulle fynde ynowe grete *and* smale
Of storial þing þat toucheþ gentilesse
And eek moralite and holynesse
Blameþ not me if þat ȝe cheese amys
The meller is a cherl ȝe knowe wel þis
So was þe Reeue eek and oþer mo
And harlotrie þey tolden boþe tuo
Auiseþ ȝou and putteþ me out of blame
And eek men schal not make ernest of game

[*No gap in the MS.*]

Whilom þer was dwellyng' at Oxenfoord
A Riche gnoffe þat' gestes heeld to boorde
And of' his crafte he was a Carpunter
Wiþ him þer was dwellyng' a pouer scoler
hadde lerned art' but all his fantasye
Was torned for to lerne astrologie/
And coupe a certein of' conclusions
To demen by interrogacioñs
If' þat' men axed him in certeyn houres
Whan men schuld haue drought' or elles schoures
Or if' men axed him what' schal bifalle
Of' euery þing' I may nought' reknen alle
This clerk' was cleped heende Nicholas
Of derne loue he coupe and of' Solas
And þer-to he was sleigh and ful priue
And like a mayde meeke for to see
A chambre hadde he in þat' hostellerie
Allone wiþouten eny companye [leaf 45, back]
fful fetisly dight' wiþ herbes soote
And he himself' as sweete as is þe roote
Of' liconis or any Settewale
his almagist' and bokes grete and smale
his astrelabre longyng' for his art'
his augrym stones' layen faire a part
On schelfes couched at his beddes heede
His presse y-couered with a faldyng' reed
And al aboute þer lay a gay sautrie
On which he made a night melodye
So swetly þat' alle þe chambre ronge
And angelus ad virginem he songe
And after þat' he song' þe kinges note
fful ofte blessed was his merie þrote

And þus þe sweete clerk' his tyme spente
After his freendes fyndyng' and his rente
This Carpunter hadde wedded a newe wyf'
Which þat' he louede more þan his lyf
Of xviij. 3eer sche was of' age
Ialous he was and heeld hir narwe in cage
ffor sche was wylde and 3ong' and he was old
And demed him self' ben lik' a Cokewold
he knew not' Catoñ for his witte was rude
That' bad men wedde his similitude
Men scholde wedde after here astat
ffor youþe and eelde is often in debat
But' siþen þat' he was fallen in the snare
He most' endure as oþer folk' his care
ffair was þis 3onge wijf' and þer wiþ al
As eny wesele hire body gent' and smal
A ceynt' sche wered barred al of' self'
A barmcloþ as whit' as morne melk'
Vpon hire lendes ful of' many a goore
Whit' was hir smok' and brouded al bifore
And eek' byhynde on hire coler aboute
Of' kolblak' silk' wiþinne and eek' wiþoute [leaf 46]
The tapes of' hir white voluper
Were of' þe same suyte of' hire coler
hire filet' brood of' silk' and sitt' ful hye
and sikerly sche hadde a likerous yhe
fful smal y-pulled were hire browes two
And þo were bent' and blak' as any slo
Sche was ful more blisful for to see/
Than is þe newe perionette tree
And softer þan þe wolle is of' a weþer
And by hir gerdul hinge a purs of' leþer
Tassed wiþ selk' and perled wiþ latoun
In al þis world to seeken vp and doun
Ther is no man so wys þat' couþe þenche
So gay a popelote or swich a wenche/

fful brighter was þe schynyng of hir hewe
Than in þe tour þe noble y-forged newe
But of hir song it was so lowd and 3erne
As any swalwe chitering on a berne/
Ther-to sche couþe skippe and make a game
As ony kyde or calf folwyng his dame
hir mouþ was sweete as braket or þe meth
Or hoord of appeles layd in hay or heth
Wynsyng sche was as is a Ioly colt
long as a mast and vpright as a bolt
A broche sche bar on hir loue coler
As brood as is þe boos of a bocler
hire schos were laced on hire legges hye
Sche was a primerole a pygges nye
ffor eny lord to liggen in his bedde/
Or 3et for eny good yeman to wedde
¶ Now sire and eft sire so bifel þe caas
That on a day þis heende Nicholas
ffil wiþ þis 3onge wijf to rage and playe
Whil þat hir housbonde was at Osenaye
As clerkes ben ful subtil and ful queinte
And priuely he caught hir by þe queynte [leaf 46, back]
And seyde I wis but if ich haue my wille
ffor derne loue of þe lemman I spille/
And held hir harde by þe haunche bones
And seyde lemman loue me wel al at ones
Or I wol deyen al so god me saue
And sche sprong as a cold doþ in þe traue
And with hir hed sche wried faste awey
Sche seide I wil nat kisse þe by my fey
Whi labbe quod ich labbe Nicholas
Or I wol crie out harrow and allas
Do wey 3oure hondes for 3oure curtesye
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crie
And spak so faire and profred him so fast
That sche hir loue graunted him atte last

And swor hir oþ by seint Thomas of kent
That sche wolde ben at his comaundement
Whan þat sche may hir leysir wel aspye
Myn housbonde is so ful of Ialousye
That but I wayte wel and be priue
I woot right wel I nam but deed quoþ sche
Ye moote ben ful derne as in þis caas
Nay þer-of kare ȝe nought quod Nicholas
A clerk hadde litherly biset his while
But if he couþe a carpunter begile
And þus þey ben acorded and y-sworn
To wayte a tyme as I haue told biforn
Whan Nicholas hadde þis euerydel
And thakked hire aboute þe lendes wel
he kist hir sweete and takþ his Sauterie
And playeþ faste and makeþ melodye
Than fil it þus þat to þe parissche cherche/
Cristes owne werkes for to werche
This goode wijf wente on an haly day
hir forhed schon as bright as any day
So was it waissche whan sche leet hir werk
Now was þer of þat chirche a parissche clerk [leaf 47]
The which þat was y-cleped absolon
Crul was his heer and as þe gold it schon
And strouted as a fanne large and brode
ffull streyte and euene lay his Ioly schode
his rode was reed his eyhen gray as goos
Wiþ poules wyndow coruen in his schoos
In hoses rede he wente fetisly
I-clad he was ful smal and propurly
Al in a kertell al of light waget
ffull faire an þikke ben þe poyntz y-sett
And þer vpon he hadde a gay surplys
As whit as is þe blosme on þe Rys
A merie child he was so god me saue
Wel couþe he laten blood or clippe or schaue

And make a charter of lond or an aquitance
In twenty maner coupe he trippe and daunce.
After pe scole of Oxenforde po
And wip his legges casten to and fro
And playen songes on a smal rubible
Ther-to he song sum tyme a lowde quynyble/
And as wel coupe he pleye on a giterne
In all pe toun nas brewhous ne tauerne
That he ne visited wip his solas
Ther any gaillard tappestere was
But soth to sein he was somdel squaymous
Of fartyng and of speche daungerous
¶ This absolon pat Ioly was and gay
Gop with a censer on pe haly day
Sensyng pe wyfes of pe parische fast
And many a louely look on hem he cast
And namely on pis carpunteres wyf
To loke on hire him pought a mery lijf
Sche was so proper and swete and swete and licorous
I dar wel sein if sche hadde ben a mous
And he a catte he wolde hire hente anoon
This parissche clerk pis ioly absolon [leaf 47, back]
hap in his herte such a loue longynge
That of no wijf took he non offrynge
ffor curtesie he seide he wolde non
The moone whan it was night ful brighte schon
And Absolon his giterne hap I-take
ffor paramoure he poughte for to wake
And forp he gop iolyf and amorous
Til he com to pe carpunteres hous
A litel after cokkes had y-crowe
And dressed him vp by a schot wyndowe
Thas was vpon pe carpenteres walle
he syngep in his voys gentil and smalle
Now dere lady if pi willes be
I prey yow pat ȝe wil Rewe on me

ffol wel acordant to his giternyng
This Carpenter awok and herde him syng
And spak vnto his wijf and seyde anoon
What Alisoñ heris þou not absolon
That chaunteþ þus vnder oure boures walle
And sche answerde hir housbonde þer wiþ alle
Yis god woot Iohan I here it euery del
This passeþ forþ what wile ȝe bet þan wel
ffro day to day þis ioly Absolon
So woweþ hire þat him is woo bigon
he wakeþ al þe night and al þe day
he kembede his lokkes brode and made hem gay
he woweþ hire by meues and broeage/
And swore he wolde ben hir oughne page/
he syngeþ brokking as a nightyngale
he sente hire pyment meth and spiced ale/
And wafres pypyng hoot out of þe gleede
And for sche was of town he profred meede
ffor somme folk wol be wonnen for richesse
And somme for strokes and somme for gentilnesse
Som tyme to schewe his lightnesse and maystrie
he pleieth heraudes vpon a scaffold hye [leaf 48]
But what auayleþ him as in þis caas
Sche loueþ so þis heende Nicholas
That Absolon may blowe þe buckes horn
he ne haþ for his labour but a skorn
And þus sche makeþ absolon here ape
And all his Ernest turneþ till a Iape
ffor soþ is þis prouerbe it is no lye
Men sein right þus alwey þey neighe slyc
makeþ þe ferre leef to be loth
ffor þough þat absolon be wood or wroþ
By cause þat he fer was from hire sight
þis neigh Nicholas stood in his light
¶ Now here ye wel heende Nicholas
ffor absolon may waille and synge allas

And so bifell it on a Saturday
This Carpunter was gon to Osenay
And heende Nicholas and alisoñ
Acorded be to þis Conclusioñ
That Nicholas schal schapen hem a wile
This seely Ialous housbonde to by-gyle
And if so be þe game wente aright
Sche scholde slepen in his arm al nyght
ffor þis was his desyr and hire also
And right anon wiþouten wordes mo
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie
But doþ ful softe vnto his chambre carie
Boþe mete and drynke for a day or tweye
And to hire housbonde bad hir for to seye
If þat he axed after Nicholas
Sche scholde say sche nyste wher he was
Of al þat day sche seigh him nought wiþ eye
Sche trowed þat he was in maladye
ffor for no cry hir mayde couþe him calle
he nolde answere for noþing þat mighte falle
This passeþ forþ al þilke Saturday
That Nicholas stille in his Chambre lay [leaf 18, back]
And eet or sleep or dede what him liste
Til Sonday þat þe sonne goþ to reste
This sely carpunter haþ gret meruayle
Of Nicholas or what þing might him ayle
And sayde I am adrad by seint Thomas
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas
God schilde þat he deide sodeinly
This world is now ful tykell sikerly
I seigh to day a cors y-born to cherche
That now a monday last I saugh him werche
Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anon
Clepe at his dore or knocke with a stoon
loke how it is and telle me boldely
This knaue goþ him vp ful stirdily

And at' þe chambre dore whil þat' he stood
he criede and knokkede as þat he were wood
What' how what' do 3e mayster Nicholay
how may 3e sleepen al þe longe day
But' al for nought' he herde nought' a word
An hole he fond ful lough vpon a bord
Ther as þe catte was wont in for to creepe
And at' þat' hole he loked in ful deepe/
And atte last' he hadde of' him a sight'
This nicholas sat euer capyng' vpright
As he hadde keked on þe newe moone
And doun he goþ and tolde his mayster soone
In what' array he saugh þis ilke man
This Carpunter to blessen him bigan
And seyde help vs seinte ffredeswide
A man woot' litel what' him schal betyde/
This man is falle with his astronomie
In som woodnesse or in som agonye
I þought ay wel how þat it scholde be
Men scholde not' knowe of' goddes priuite
3e blessed be alwey a lewed man
That' nought' but oonly his bileeue can [leaf 49]
So ferd anoþer clerk' with astronomie
he walked in þe feeldes for to prie
vppon þe sterres what' þer schulde bifalle
Til he was in a Marle pit' y-falle
he saugh nought þat' but' 3it' by seint' Thomas
Me reweth sore of' heende Nicholas
he schal be rated of' his studyyng'
If' þat' I may by Ihesu [1] heuene king' [1 MS. ihc]
Gete me a staf' þat' I may vnderspore
Whil þat þou Robyn heuest' vp þe dore
he schal out' of' his studying' as I gesse
And to þe chambre dore he gan him dresse
his knaue was a strong' carl for þe nones
And by þe hasp he heef' it / of' at' oones

In to þe floor þe dore fill anon
This Nicholas sat' ay as stille as stoon
And euere capede vpward in to the ayre
This Carpunter wende he were in despaire
And hent' him by þe schuldres mightyly
And schook' him harde and cryed spitously
What Nicholas what' how looke a doun
Awake and þenk' on cristes passioun
I crouche þe from Elues and fro wightes
Ther-wiþ þe night' spell seyde he anon rightes
Of' foure halues of' þe hous aboute
And on þe þresschefold on þe dore wiþoute
Ihesu crist' and seynt' Benedight'
Blesse þis hous from euery wikkede wight'
ffor þe nightes verye þe white Pate noster
Where wentestow þou seinte peteris suster
And atte laste þis heende Nicholas
Gan for to sike sore and seyde allas
Schal al þe werld be lost' eft' sones now
This Carpenter answerde what' seist' þou
What' þink' on god as we doon men þat' swynke
This nicholas answerde feche me drynke [leaf 49, back]
And after wol I speke in priuitee
Of' certein þing' þat' toucheþ þe and me
I wil telle it non oþer man certeyn
This Carpenter goþ doun and comeþ agein
And brought' of' mighty ale a large quart'
And whan þat' ech of' hem hadde dronken his part'
This Nicholas his dore faste schette
And doun þe Carpunter by him he sette
And seyde Iohñ myn hooste leef' and deere
Thou schalt' vpon my trouþe swere me heere
That' to no wight' þou schalt' þis counseil wreye
ffor it' is cristes counseill þat' I seie/
And if' þou telle it man þou art' forlore/
ffor þis vengance þou schalt' haue þerfore

That' if' þou wreie me þou schalt' be wood
¶ Nay crist' forbede it for his holy blood
Quod þo þis sely man I nam no labbe
Ne þough I seie I nam not' leef' to gabbe
Sey what' þou wolt' I schal it neuer telle
To child ne wijf' by him þat' hariede helle/
Now Iohan quod Nicholas I wil nouȝt' lye
I haue I-founde in myn astrologie/
As I haue loked in þe moone brigħt
That' now a monday next at quarter night
Schal falle a Rayn and þat' so wilde and wood
That' half' so gret' was neuer Nowels flood
This world he seide in lasse þan in an hour
Schal al be dreynt' so hidous is þe schour
Thus schal mankynde drenche and leese here lif
This Carpunter answerde allas my wijf'
And schal sche drenche allas myn alisoun
ffor sorwe of' þis he fell almost' a doun
And seyde is þer no remedye in þis caas
Whi ȝis for gode quod heende Nicholas
If' þou wolt' worchen after lore and red
Thou mayst' nouȝt' werken after þin oughne heed [leaf 50]
ffor þus seiþ Salamon þat' was ful trewe
Work' all by counseiłł and þou schalt' nought' rewe
And if' þou worken wolt' by good counseille
I vndertake wiþoute mast' or seile
Yet' schal I saue hire and þe and me/
hast' þou nought' herde how saued was Noe
Whan þat' owre lord haþ warned him biforn
That' all þe world with water schulde be lorn
ȝis quod þis Carponter ful ȝore ago
hastow not' herd quod Nicholas also
The sorwe of' Noe wiþ his felaschipe
Or þat' he mighte gete his wif' to schipe
him hadde leuer I dar wel vndertake
At' þilke tyme þan all his weþeres blake

43138

That' sche hadde a schip hir self' allon
And þer-fore wost' þou what' is best' to doon
This axeþ haste and of' an hastyf' þing'
Men may nought preche or make tarying'
Anon go gete vs faste in to þis Inne
A knedyng' trough or elles a kemelynne
ffor ech of' vs but' look' þat þey ben large
In which men mowe swymme as in a barge
And han þer vitailles suffisaunt'
But' for a day fy on þe remenaunt
The water schal aslake and gon a way
Aboute prime vpon þe nexte day
But' Robyn may not' wite of' þis þi knaue/
Ne eek' þy mayde gylle I may nought' saue/
Axe nought why for þough þou axe me
I wol nought' tellen goddes priuite
Sufficeþ þe but' if' þi wittes madde
To haue as gret' a grace as noe hadde
Thi wif' schal I wel sauen out' of' doute
Go now þi wey and speed þe heer aboute/
But when þou hast for hire and þe and me
Y-geten vs þese knedyng' tubbes þre [leaf 50, back]
Than schalt' þou hang' hem in þe rof' ful hye
That' noman of' oure purueance espye
And whan þou þus hast' don as I haue seyd
And hast' oure vitailes faire in hem y-leyde
And eek' an ax to smyte þe corde a tuo
Whan þat' þe water comeþ þat' we may go
And broke an hole an heigh vpon þe gable
vnto þe gardeynward ouer þe stable
That' we may freely passen forþ oure wey
Whan þat' þe grete schour is gon a wey
Thanne schalt' þou swymme as mery I vndertake
As doþ þe white doke after his drake
Than wol I clepe how alisoñ how Ioon
Be merie for þe flood wol passe anon

And þou wolt sein hailt maister Nicholay
Goode morwen I see þe wel for it is day
And þanne schal we be lordes alt oure lif
Of alle þe world as Noe and his wijf
But þat of oo þing I warne þe ful right
Be wel auysed on þat ilke night
That we ben entred in to þe schippes boord
That noon of vs ne speke nought a word
Ne clepe ne crye but been in his preyere
ffor it is goddes oughne heeste deere
Thy wijf and þou mot hange fer atwynne
ffor þat betwixe ȝou schal be no synne
No more in lokyng þan þer schal in dede
This ordinance is seid go god þe speede
To morwe at night whan men ben alt on sleepe
In to our knedyn tubbes wil we creepe
And sitten þer abidyng goddes *grace*
Go now þy wey I haue no lenger space
To make of þis no lenger sermonyng
Men sein þus sende þe wise and sey no þing
þou art so wys it needeþ þe nought to teche
Go saue oure lijf and þat I þe beseche [leaf 51]
¶ This seely Carpunter goþ forþ his wey
fful ofte he seyde allas and weylawey
And to his wijf he tolde his p*r*iuitee
And sche was warr and knew it bet þan he
What al þis queynte cast was for to seye
But naþeles sche ferde as sche wolde deye
And seyde allas go forþ þi weie anon
help vs to scape or we bẽ deede echon
I am þi trewe verray wedded wijf
Go deere spouse and help to saue oure lijf
¶ lo which a gret þing is affectiõn
Men may dye of ymaginaciõn
So deepe may impressions be take
This seely Carponter bygynneþ quake

him þenketh verraily þat' he may se
Noe flood come walkyng' as þe see
To drenchen alisoñ his hony deere
he weepeþ waylleþ maketh sory cheere/
he sykeþ wiþ ful many a sory swogh̄
And goþ and geteþ him a knedyng' trough̄
And after a tubbe and a kemelyn
And priuily he sent' hem to his In
And hyng' hem in þe roof' in priuite
his oughne hond he made eek' leddres þre
To clymben by þe ronges and þe stalkes
vnto þe tubbes hangyng' in þe balkes
And hem vitailled boþe trough and tubbe
Wiþ bred and cheese and good ale in a Iubbe/
Suffisyng right' ynough as for a day
But' ar þat' he hadde maad al þis array
he sent' his knaue and eek' his wenche also
vpon his neede to londoñ for to go
And on þe monday whan it' drough to night'
he schette his dore wiþoute candel light'
And dressed all' þing' as it' scholde be/
And schortly clomben vp all' þre/ [leaf 51, back]
Thei setten stille wel a furlong' way
Now pater noster clum seide Nicholay
And Clum quod Iohñ and Clum seide alisoñ
This Carpunter seide his deuocioñ
And stille he sitte and biddeþ his prayere
Awaityng' on the rayn if he it heere
The deth sleepe for wery bysynesse
ffil on þis Carpunter right' as I gesse
Aboute corfew tyme or litel more
ffor trauaille of his gost' he groneþ sore
And eft' he routeþ for his heed myslay
Doun of' þe laddre stalkeþ Nicholay
And alisoñ ful softe a doun sche spedde
Wiþouten wordes mo þey gon to bedde

Ther as þe carpunter is wont' to lye
Ther was þe reuel and þe melodye/
And þus lith alisoñ and Nicholas
In busynesse of' merþe and of' solas
Til þat þe belle of' laudes gan to rynge
And the freres in þe chauncell gonne synge/
This parische clerk' þis amorous absolon
That' is for loue alwey so wo bigon
vpon þe monday was at' Osenay
With compaignie him to desport' and play
And axed vpon caas a cloisterer
fful priuily after Ioñ̄ þe Carpunter
And he drough him a part' out' of þe chirche
And seyde I not' I saugh̄ him heere nought' werche
Sipþe Saturday I trowe þat' he be went'
ffor tymber þere oure abbot' haþ him sent'
ffor he is wont' for tymber for to go
And dwelle atte graunge a day or tuo
Or elles he is at' his hous certeyn
Wher þat' he be I can nought' soþly sein
This absolon ful ioly was and light'
And þoughte now is tyme to wake al nyght' [leaf 52]
ffor sikerly I saugh him nought' styryng'
Aboute his dore syn day bigan to spring'
So mote I þriue I schal at' cokkes crowe
fful priuily knokken as his wyndowe
That' stant' ful lowe vpon his boures walle
To alisoñ now wol I tellen alle
My loue longyng' for ȝit' I schal not' misse
That' atte laste wey I schal hir kisse
Som maner comfort' schal I haue par fay
My mouþ haþ icched al þis longe day
That' is a signe of' kissyng' atte leste
Al night' me mette eek' I was at' a feeste
Therfore I wol go sleepe an our or tweye
And al þe night' þan wol I wol I wake and pleye

Whan þat' þe ferste cok' haþ crowe anon
vp rist' þis Ioly louer absolon
And him arrayeþ gay and poynt/ deuyse
But' ferst' he chèweþ grayn and likorise
To smellen swoote or he hadde kempt' his here
vnder his tonge a trewe loue he bèere/
ffor þer-by wende he to be gracious
he rowmeth to þe carpenteres hous
And stille he stant' vnder þe schot wyndowe
vnto his brest' it' raught' it' was so lowe/
And softe he coughed wiþ a semy soun
What' do ȝe hony combe swete alisoun
My faire brid my sweete synamome/
Awaketh lemman myn and speke þ to me
We[l] litel þenken ȝe vpon my woo
That' for ȝoure loue I swete as I go
No wonder is þough þat' I swelte and swete
I morne as doþ þe lambe after þe teete
I-wys lemman I haue such loue longyng'
That' lik' a turtel trewe is my moornyng'
I may not' ete namore þan a mayde/
Go fro þe wyndow Iakke fool sche sayde [leaf 52, back]
As help me god it' wil not' be com pame/
I loue anoþer and elles I were to blame/
Wel bette þan þe by Ihesu absolon
Go forþ þi wey or I wil caste a stoon
And lete me slepe a twenty deuel way
Allas quod absolon and weyloway
That' trewe loue was euer so yuel besette/
Than kisse me syn it may be no bette/
ffor ihesus loue and for þe loue of me
Wolt' þou þan go þi way þer-with quod sche
Ye certes lemman quod þis absolon
Than make þe redy quod sche I come anon

[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

This absolon doun sette him on his knees

And saide I am a lord at' alle degrees
ffor after þis I hope þer comeþ more
lemman þi grace and sweete brid þin ore
The wyndow sche vndoþ and þat' in hast/
haue do quod sche com of' and speed þe faste
lest' þat' our neighebore þe espie
This absolon gan wipe his mouþ ful drye
Derk' was þe night' as piche or as þe cole
And at' the wyndow out' sche putte hire hole
And absolon him fil no bet' ne wers
But' wiþ his mouþ he kiste hire naked ers/
fful sauorly er he were war of' þis/
A bak' he stert' and þought' it was amys/
ffor wel he wiste a womman haþ no berd
he felt' a þing' al rough and longe y-hered
And sayde fy allas what' haue I do
Tehe quod sche and clapt' þe wyndow to
And absolon goþ forþ a sory pas
A berde a berd seide heende Nicholas
By goddes corpus þis goth faire and wel
This sely absolon herde it' euery del
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte
And to himself' he seyde I schal þe quyte [leaf 53]
Who rubbeþ now who froteþ now his lippes
With dust' with sond wiþ straw with cloþ wiþ chippes
But' absolon þat' seith ful ofte allas/
My soule bitake I to Saternas/
But' me were leuere þan al þis toun quod he/
Of' þis despite awroken for to be
Allas quoþ he allas I ne hadde y-bleynt'
his hote loue is cold and al yqueynt'
ffor fro þat' tyme þat' he hadde kest' hire ers
Of' paramours he sette not' a kers/
ffor he was heled of' his maladie/
fful ofte paramoures he gan diffie
And weepe as doþ a child þat' is y-bete/
A softe paas he wente ouer þe strete/

vntil a Smyth men clepen daun Geruays
That' in his forge smythieþ plough harnays
he scharpeþ scharre and Culter bisyly.
This absolon knokkeþ al Esely
And sayde vnto Geruays and þat' anon)
What' who art' þou it' am I absolon)
What' absolon for cristes swete tree
Why ryse so raþe benedicite
What' eyleþ 3ou som gay gerl god it woot
haþ brought' 3ou þus vpon þe viritoot
By seinte note 3e wot' wel what I me[ne]
This absolon ne roughte nat' a bene
Of' all his pley no word a-gayn he gaf'
he hadde more tow on his distaf'
Than Geruays knew and sayde frend so deere
The hoote Culter in þe Chemenye heere
As lene it me I haue þer-wiþ to done/
I wol bringe it' agayn ful soone
Geruais answerde certes were it' gold
Or in a poke nobles all vntold
Thou scholdest' haue as I am trewe smith
Ey cristes foo what' wol 3e don þer-with [leaf 53, back]
Ther-of' quod absolon be as be may
I schal wel telle it þe to morwe day
And caughte þe culter by þe colde stele
fful softe out' aþ þe dore he gan to stele
And went' vnto þe Carpenteres wal
he koughede first' and knokkede þer wiþ al
vpon þe wyndow right' as he dede ere/
This alisoñ answerde who is þere
That' knokkeþ as I warant' it' a þeef'
Why nay quod he god woot' my sweete leef'
I am þin absolon þi dereling'
Of' gold quod he I haue þe brought' a ryng'
My moder yaf' it' me so god me saue/
fful fyn it' is and þer-to wel y-graue

This wol I yiuen þe if þou me kisse
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse/
And þoughte he wolde amenden al þe Iape/
he schulde kisse his ers or þat he scape
And vp þe wyndow dide he hastily
And oute his ers he putte priuily
Ouer þe buttoke to þe haunche bon
And þer-wiþ spake þis clerke þis absolon
Spek swete brid I note wher þou arte
This Nicholas anon leete flee a farte
As grete as it hadde ben a þonder dent
That wiþ þe strooke he was almoste y-blente
And he was redy wiþ his Iren hote
And Nicholas in þe ers he smote
Of goþ þe skyn an hande brood aboute/
The hoote culter brenned so his toute/
And for þe smerte he wende for to dye
As he were wood for woo he gan to crye/
help water water help for goddes herte
This Carpunter oute of his slomber sterte
And herde on cryen watir as he were wood
And þoughte allas now comeþ Noweles flood [leaf 51]
And sette him vppe wiþoute wordes mo
And wiþ an ax he smote þe corde a tuo
And doun goþ al he fond neyþer to selle/
No breed nor ale til he com to þe selle/
vpon þe floor and þer a swowen he lay
vp sterte hire alisoñ and Nicholay
and cried oute and harrow in þe strete
The neighebo*u*res boþe smale and grete
In ronnen for to gauren on þis man
That a swowen lay boþe pale and wan
ffor with þat falle he brosten haþ his arm
But stonde he moste vnto his oughne harm
ffor whan he spake he was anon bore do*u*n
With heende Nicholas and alis*o*un

They tolden euery man þat he was wood
he was a-gast so of þe Nowels flood
Thurgh fantasie þat of his vanite
he hadde y-bought him knedyng tubbes þre
And hadde hem hanged in þe roof aboue
And þat he preyed him for goddes loue
To sitten in þe roof par companye
The folk gan laughen at his fantasie
And to þe roof þay loken and þei cape
And torned all his harm vnto a Iape
ffor what so þis Carpenter answerde
It was for nought no men his reson herde
With oþes grete he was so sworn a doun
That he was holden wood in all þat toun
ffor euery clerk anon right heeld with oþer
They seyde þe man is wood my leeue broþer
And euery wight gan laughen at his strif
Thus swyued was þe Carpunteres wijf
ffor all his keepyng and his Ialousye/
And absolon haþ kist his neþer yhe
And Nicholas is scalded in his toute//
This tale is don and god saue al þe route [leaf 54, back]

¶ Explicit fabula Molendinarij

[*No gap in the MS.*]

¶ Here bygynneþ þe Reeues tale

Whan folk' han laughen at' þis nyce cas
Of' absolón and heende Nicholas ¶ C°. iij°.
Diuerse folk' diuersely þey seyde
But' for þe more part' þei lough̄ and pleyde
Ne at' þis tale I saugh noman him greeue
But' it' were oonly Osewold þe Reeue 3860
By cause he was of' Carpenteres craft'
A litel Ire is in̄ his herte laft'
he gan to grucche and blamen it' a lite
So þe ik' quod he ful wel couþe I þe quyte 3864
With bleryng' of a proud melleres ye
If' þat' me liste to speke of' Ribaudie
But' yk' am old me list' not' pley for age
Gras tyme is don my fodder is forage/ 3868
This white top writeþ myn olde ȝeres
myn herte is also mouled as myn heeres
But' if' I fare as doþ an open ers
That' ilke fruyt' is euer lenger þe wers 3872
Til it' be roten in mullok' or in stree/
We olde men I drede so fare we
Til we be roten can we nought' be ripe
We hoppen alwey whil þe world wil pipe 3876
ffor in oure wille þer stikeþ euer a naile
To haue an hoor heer and a greene taile
As haþ a leek' for þough̄ oure might' be gon
Oure wille desireþ folie euer in oon 3880
ffor whan we may nought' doon þan wole we speke
yet' in oure asschen olde is fyr y-reke
ffoure gleedes han we whiche I schal deuyse/
Auauntyng' lyuyng' anger couetyse 3884
This foure sparkes longeþ vnto eelde
Oure olde lymes now wel ben vnwelde

But wil ne schal nat failen þat is soþ
And yet haue I alway a Coltes toþ [leaf 55]
As many a 3eer as it is passen henne
Syn þat my tappe of lif bygan to renne
ffor sikerly whan I was born anoon
Deþ drough þe tappe of lijf and leet it goon 3892
And euer siþen haþ so þe tappe y-ronne
Til þat almost al empty is þe tonne
The streem of lijf now droppeþ on þe chimbe.
The sely tonge may wel rynge and chymbe. 3896
Of wrecchedenesse þat passed is ful yore
With old folk saue dotage is nomore/
Whan þat oure oost hadde herde þis sermonyng
he gan to speken as loodly as a king 3900
he seyde what amounteþ alt þis witte
What schal we speke alday of holy writte
The deuel maade a reeue for to preche
Or of a Soutere schipman or a leche 3904
Sey forþ þi tale and tarie nought þe tyme
lo deppeford and it is halfwey prime
lo Grenewich þat many a schrewe is Inne
It were al tyme þi tale for to begynne 3908
Now sires *quod* þis Osewold þe Reeue
I pray you alle þat ye nought 3ou greeue
Thou I answere and somdel sette his houve
ffor leueful it is with force force of schouve 3912
This dronken mellere haþ y-told vs heere
how þat bygyled was a Carpuntere/
*Per*auenture in scorn for I am oon
And by youre leeue I schal him quyte anoon 3916
Right in his cherles termes wil I speke/
I preye to god his nekke mote tobreke
he can wel in myn 3e sen a stalke
But in his owne he can nought seen a balke/ ¶ ffabula

[No gap in the MS.]

AT Trumpyngtoñ nought fer fro Cantabregge
Ther goþ a brook and ouer þat a bregge
vppon þe whiche brook þer stant a Melle
And þis is verray soþ þat I ȝou telle [leaf 55, back]
A meller was þer duellyng many a day
As any pecok he was proud and gay
Pype he couþe and fissche and nettes beete
And torne coppes and wel wrastle and scheete/
Ay by his belt he bar a long Panade
And of a swerd ful trenchant was þe blade/
A Ioly popper bar he in his pouche
Ther was noman for peril durste him touche/
A scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose
Round was his face and Camuse was his nose/
As pyled as an ape was his sculle
he was a market betere atte fulle
Ther was no wight þat dorst hand on him legge
But if he swor he scholde anon abegge
A þeef he was forsoþe of corn and mele
And þat a sleigh and vsaunt for to stele
his name was hoote deynous Symkyn
A wijf he hadde come of noble kyn
The parsoun of þe toun hir fader was/
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras
ffor þat Symkyn scholde in his blood allye
Sche was y-fostred in a Nonnerie/
ffor symkyn wolde no wyf as he sayde
But sche were wel ynorissched and a mayde/
To sauen his estate of yomanrie/
And sche was proud and pert as is a pye
A ful fair sight was it vppon hem tuo
On halidayes biforn hire wolde he go

Wiþ his typet' wounden aboute his heede/
And sche cam after in a gyte of' reede/
And Symkyn hadde hosen of' þe same
Ther dorste no wight' clepen hire but dame
Was non so hardy þat' wente by þe way
That' wiþ hire dorste or ones rage or play
But' if' he wolde be slain of' Symkyn
With panade or with knyf' or boydekyn [leaf 56]
ffor Ielous folk' ben perilous euermo
Algate þei wolde here wyues wenden so
And eek' for sche was somdel smoterlich
Sche was as digne as water in a dich
As ful of' hoker and of bisemare
hire þoughte þat' a lady schulde hir spare
What' for hire kynrede and hire nortelrie
That' sche hadde lerned in þe nonnerie
A doughter hadde þe betwixe hem tuo
Of twenty 3er wiþouten eny moo
Sauyng' a childe þat' was of' half' 3eer age
In cradel it' lay it' was a proper page/
This wenche þikke and wel ygrowen was
Wiþ Camoys nose and eyen grey as glas
Wiþ buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye
But' right' fair was hire heer I wol nought' lye
¶ The parsoñ of þe toun for sche was fair
In purpos was to maken hire his hair
Boþe of' his catel and his mesuage
And strange he made it/ of' hire mariage
his purpos was for to bistowe hire hye
In to som worþi blood of' auncetrie/
ffor holy chirches good moot' ben dispended
On holy cherche blood þat' is descended
Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure/
þough þat' þe holy chirche scholde deuoure
Gret' soken haþ þis meller out' of doute
Wiþ whete and malt' of all' þe land aboute/

And nameliche þer was a gret collegge
Men clepeþ þe Soler halle of Cantabregge
þere was here whete and eek' here malt' y-grounde
And on a day it happeþ in a stounde
Syk' lay þe manciple on a maladie/
Men wenden wisly þat' he schulde dye
ffor which þis mellere stal boþe mele and corn
An hundred tyme more þanne biforn [leaf 56, back]
ffor þer biforn he stal but' curteysly
But' now he was a theef' outrageously
ffor which þe wardein chidde and made fare/
But' þer-of' sette þe meller nought' a tare/
he crakede bost and swor it was nought' so/
Thanne were þere ȝonge sceleres tuo
That' dwelten in þe halle of' which I seye
Testyf' þey were and lusty for to pleye
And oonly for here mirthe and reuerye
vpon þe wardein bisily þei crye
To ȝif' hem leue but' a litel stounde
To go to melle and seen here corn y-grounde
And hardily þei dorste leye here nekke
The mellere schulde nat' stele hem half' a pekke/
Of' corn ne by sleight' ne by force hem Reue
And atte laste þe wardeyn yaf' hem leue
Iohñ hight' þat' oon and alayn hight' þat' oþer
Of' oo toun were þei born þat highte strother
ffer in the North I can not' telle where
This alayn makeþ redy aff his gere
And on an hors þe sak' he cast' anon
forþ goþ alayn þe clerk' and also Iohñ
Wiþ good swerd and wiþ bokeler by his syde
Iohñ knew þe wey him needede no guyde/
And atte melle þe sak' a doun he layth
Alain spak' first'. alhail Symoñ in faiþ
how fares þi faire doughter and þi wyf'
Alayn welcome *quod* Symkyn by my lyf'

And Iohñ also how now what' do.ȝe heere
By god *quod* Iohñ Symond neede haþ no peere
him bihoues serue himself' þat' has na swayn
Or elles he is a folt' as clerkes sayn
Oure manciple I hope he wil be deed
Swa werkes him ay þe wanges in his heed
And þerfore is I come and eek' alayn
To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn [leaf 57]
I pray you speedes vs heithen þat ȝe may
It' schal be don quod Symkyn by my fay
What' wil ȝe doon whil þat it' is in hande
By god right' by þe hoper wil I stande
Quoþ Iohan and se how gates þe corn gas Inne
ȝit' saugh I neuer by my fader kynne
how þat' þe hoper wagged til and fra
Alayn answerde Iohñ and wiltow swa
Than wil I be byneþe by my croune
And se how gates þe mele falles a doune
In-til þe trough þat' sal be my disporte
Quod Iohñ in faath I may ben of' ȝour sorte
I is as ille a melle as ere ȝe
This mellere smylede at here nycete
And þought' al þis nys don but' for a wile
They wene þat' no man hem may begyle
But' by my þrift' yit' schal I biere here ye
ffor al þe sleight' in here philosophie
The more queinte crekes þat' þay make/
The more wol I stele whan I take
In stede of' flour ȝit' wol I yeue hem brenne/
The grettest' clerkes ben nought' þe wisest menne
As whilom to þe wolf' þus spak' þe mare
Of' all here arte counte I nouȝt' a tare/
¶ Out' of' þe dore he goþ ful priuely
Whan þat' he saugh his time softely
he lokeþ vp and doun til he haþ founde
The clerkes hors þer as it stood ybounde

Behynde þe mille vnder a leuesel
And to þe hors he goþ him faire and wel
he strepeþ of' þe bridel right' anoon
And whan þe hors was laus he gynneþ goon
Toward þe fen þare wilde mares renne/
And forth with wehe þorugh þikke and þorugh̄ þenne
This meller goþ agayn nó word he sayde
But' doþ his note and wiþ hise clerkes pleyde [leaf 57, back]
Til þat' hire corn was faire and wel y-grounde
And whan þe mele is sakked and y-bounde
This Iohn̄ goþ out' and fynt' his hors away
And gan to crye harrow and weylaway
Oure hors is lost' Alayn for goddes banes
Steppe on þi feet' com of' man al at' anes
Allas oure wardein has his palfray lorn
This aleyn al forgat' bope mele and corn
Al was out' of' his mynde his housbondrye
What' whilk' wey is he gon he gan to crye
The wyf' cam leepyng' inward at' a ren
Sche seyde allas 3our hors goth in þe fen
With wilde mares as faste as he may goo
Vnthank' come on his hand þat' bond him so
And he þat' bettre scholde haue knyt' þe reyne
Allas quod Iohn̄ Alayn for cristes peyne
lay doun þi swerd and I wol myn alswa
I is ful swift' god wat' as is a Ra
By goddes harte he sal nou3t scape vs baþe
Why ne had þou put' þe caple in þe lathe
Ilhaille by godde alayn þou is a fonne
Thise sely clerkes han fulfaste y-ronne
Toward þe fen bope alayn and eek' Iohn̄
And whan þe Mellere seigh þat' þei were gon
he half' a buisschel of' here corn haþ take
And bad his wijf' go knede it' in a cake
And seide I trowe þe clerkes weren aferd
Yet' kan a mellere make a clerkes berd

ffor all his art' yet' lat' hem gon here weye
Lo where he goþ ye lat' þe children pleye
They gete him nought' so lightly by my croun
Thise seely clerkes rennen vp and doun
With keep. keep. stand. stand. iossa. warderere /
Ga whistel þou and I schal keepe him heere
But' schortly til it' was verray night'
They coupe nought' þough þei dede all here might' [leaf 58]
here capel cacche he ran alwey so faste
Til in a diche þei caught' him atte laste
Wery and wet' as beest' is in þe rayn
Comeþ seely Iohñ and with him comþ alayn
¶ Allas quod Iohñ þe day þat' I was born
Now ere we dryuen til hething' and til scorn
Oure corn is stole men wil vs fooles calle
Boþe þe wardein and oure felawes alle
And namely þe meller weylawey
Thus pleyneþ Iohan as he goþ by þe wey
Toward þe melle and bayard in his hond
The meller sittyng' by þe fyr he fond
ffor it' was nyght' and ferþer might' he nought'
But' for þe loue of' god þei him bisought
Of herberwe and of' eese as for here peny
The mellere seyde agayn if' þer be eny
Such as if is 3it schal 3e haue 3oure part'
Myn hous is streit' but' 3e han lerned art'
3e can by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of' twenty foote of' space
lat' se now if' þis place mow suffise
Or make it rowmere with speche as is 3oure gyse
Now Symond seyde þis Iohñ by seint Cuthberd
As is þou mery and þat' is faire answerd
I haue herd say men sal take of' tua þinges
Swilk' as he fyndes or take swilk' as he brynges/
But' specially I pray þe ooste deere
Gete vs som mete and drynk' and mak' vs cheere

And we wol payen trewly atte fulle
With empty handes men may naan haukes tulle
Lo heer oure siluer reedy for til spende
This meller to þe toun his doughter sende
ffor ale and breed and rosted hem a goos
And boond here hors it scholde namore go loos
And in his owne chambre he made a bedde
With scheetes and wiþ chalons faire y-spredde [leaf 58, back]
Nought from his oughne bed ten foote or twelue/
his doughter hadde a bed al by hir selue/
Right in þe same chambre by and by
It might be no bette and cause why
Ther was no romer herberwe in þe place
þey soupen and þey speken hem of solace
And drynken euere strong ale atte beste
A-boute mydnygħt went þei to reste
Wel haþ þe mellere vernysshed his heed
ful pale he was for-drunken and nouȝt reed
he yexeth and he speke þ þurgħ þe nose/
As he were on þe quakke or on þe pose/
To bedde he goþ and with him goþ his wijf
As eny Iay he light was and Iolif
So was hire Ioly whistel wel y-wette
The cradell at hire beddes feet is sette/
To rokken and yeue þe childe to souke
And whan þat dronken was al in þe crouke
To bedde wente þe doughter right anoon
To bedde goþ Alayn and also Ioħn̄
Ther was nomore þem needede no dwale
This meller haþ so wisely bibbed ale
That as an hors he snorteþ in his slepe
Ne of his tayl behynde he took no keepe
his wijf bar him a burdoñ a ful strong
Men mighten heere here routyng a furlong
The wenche routeþ eek *par* compaignie
Alayn þe clerk þat herde þis melodye

he pokede Iohñ and seyde sleepist' þou
herdestow euer slik' a sang' ar now
lo swilk' a couplyng' is bitwixe hem alle
A wilde fyr on þair bodies falle
ho herkned euer slik' a ferly þing'
Ye þai sall haue þe flour of yll endyng'
This lange night' þer tydes me na reste/
But' 3it' na force al schal bé for þe beste [leaf 59]
ffor Iohñ seide als euer mote I þriue
If' þat' I may yon wenche wol I swyue
Som esement haþ lawe schapen vs
ffor Iohñ þer is a lawe þat' seith þus
That' if' a man in a poynt' be agreeued
That' in anoþer he schal be releeued
Oure corn is stolen soþly it is no nay
And we han had an ylle fitte to day
And syn I schal haue noon amendement
Agayn my losse I wol haue esement
By goddes sale it' sal nan oþir be
This Iohñ answerde Alayn so mot' I þe
The meller is a perilous man he sayde
And if' þat' he out' of his slape abrayde
he mighte don vs boþe a vilanye
Alayn answerde I counte him nought' a flye
And vp he rist' and by þe wenche he crepte
This wenche lay vpright' and faste slepte
Til he so neigh was or sche mighte spye
That' it' hadde been to late for to crye
And schortly for to seyn þey were at' oon
Now play alayn for I wol speke of' Ioon
This Iohñ liþ stille a forlong' wey or tuo
And to himself' he makeþ rouþe and wo
Allas quod he þis is a wikke Iape
Now may I sayn þat' I is but an ape
3et haþ my felaw somwhat' for his harm
he has þe myllers doughter in his arm'

he auntred him and haþ his needes spedde
And I lye as a draf' sak' in my bedde
And whan þis Iape is told anoþer day
I schal be holde a daffe a Cokenay
I wol arise and aunter it by my faith
vnhardy is vnseely as men saith
And vp he ros and softely he went'
vnto þe cradiłł and in his hand it hent [leaf 59, back]
And bar it softe vnto his beddes feet
Sone after. þe wif hire routyng' leet'
And gan to wake and went hire out' to pisse
And com agayn and gan hir cradel mysse
And groped heer and þer but sche fond noon
Allas quod sche I hadde almost' mys goon
I hadde almost' goon to þe clerkes bedde
Ey benedicite þan hadde I foule y-spedde
And forþ sche goþ til sche þe cradil fond
Sche gropeþ alwey forþer with hire hond
And fond þe bed and þoughte nought' but' good
By cause þat' þe cradel by it stood
And nyste wher sche was for it was derk'
But' faire and wel sche crepe in to þe clerk'
And lith ful stille and wolde haue caught' a slepe
With-Inne a while þis Iohñ þe clerk' vp lepe
And on þis goode wijf' he leiþ on sore
So mery a fitte ne hadde sche not' ful yore
he prikeþ harde and deepe as he were madde
This Ioly lyf' han þise tuo clerkes ladde
Til þat' þe þridde cok' bygan to synge
Aleyn wax wery in þe dawenynge
ffor he hadde swonken all þe longe nyght'
And sayde far wel Malyn sweete wight
The day is come I may no lenger byde
But' euermoo wher so I go or ryde
I am þin oughne clerk' so haue I hele
Now deere lemman quod sche go far wele

But or þou go oo þing I wol þe telle
Whan þat þou wendest homward by þe melle
Right at þe entre of þe dore behynde
Thou schalt a cake of half a busshel fynde
That was y-maked of þin oughne mele
Which þat I hilpe my sire for to stele
And goode lemman god þe saue and keepe/
And with þat word almost sche gan to weepe [leaf 60]
Alayn vprist and þoght or þat it dawe/
I wol go creepen in by my felawe/
And fond þe cradel wiþ his hond anon
By god þoght he al wrang I haue mysgon
Myn heed is toty of my swynk/ to nyght
That makeþ me þat I go nogħt aright
I wot wel by þe cradel I haue mysgo
here lith þe meller and his wijf also
And forth he goþ on twenty deuelway
vnto þe bed þer as þe meller lay
he wende haue cropen by his felawe Ioħn
And by þe mellere in he creep anoon
And caught him by þe necke and softe he spak
he seyde þou Ioħn þou swyneshed awak
ffor cristes sawle and heer a noble game/
ffor by þat lord þat called is saint Iame
As I haue þries in þis schorte nigħt
Swyued þe mellers doughter bolt vprigh[t]
Whil þou hast as a coward ben agast
þe false harlot quod þe meller hast
A fals traitour false clerk quod he
þou schalt be ded by goddes dignite
Who durste be so bolde to disparage
My doughter þat is comen of such lynage
And by þe þrote bolle he caught alayn
And he hent him dispitously agayn
And on þe nose he smot him with his fiste/
Doun ran þe bloody streen vpon his briste

And in þe floor with nose and mouth to-broke
þei walwe as doþ tuo pigges in a poke
And vp þai gon and doun a-gayn anoon
Til þat' þe meller spurned at' a stoon
And doun he fel bakward vpon his wijf'
That' wiste noþing' of þis nyce strijf'
ffor sche was falle a sleepe a litel wigh̄t'
With Ioh̄n̄ þe clerk' þat waked hadde al þe nigh̄t' [leaf 60, back]
And with þe falle out of' hir sleep sche brayde
help holy cros of bromeholm sche sayde/
In manus tuas lord to þe I calle
Awake Symond þe feend is on me falle
Myn herte is broken help I nam but' ded
Ther liþ on vp my wombe and vp myn heed
help Symkyn for þe false clerkes fighte
This Ioh̄n̄ starte vp as fast' as euer he mighte
And grasped by þe walles to and fro
To fynde a staf' and sche stert' vp also
And knew þe estris bet' þan did þat' Ioh̄n̄
And by þe wal a staf' sche fond anon
And saugh a litel schymeryng' of' a light/
ffor at' an hole in schoon þe moone bright'
And by þat' light' sche saugh hem boþe tuo
But' sikerly sche nyste who was who
But' as sche saugh a whit' þing' in hir eye
And whan sche gan þis white þing' aspye
Sche wende þe clerk' had wered a voluper
And wiþ þe staf' sche drough ay ner and ner
And wende han hitte þis alayn atte fulle
And smot' þe meller on þe pilede skulle
That' doun he goth and cryed harrow I dye
This clerkes beet' him weel and lect' him lye
And greyþen hem and tooke here hors anon
And eek' here mele and on here wey þey goon
And atte Mille yet' þai toke here cake/
Of' half' a busschel flour ful wel y-bake

Thus is þe proude Meller wel y-bete
And haþ y-lost þe gryndyng^{t} of^{t} þe whete
And payed for þe soper eu*er*y dele/
Of^{t} Alayn and of^{t} Iohn̄ þat^{t} bette him weel 4316
his wyf^{t} is swyued and his doughter als/
lo swich it is a mellere to be fals
And þerfore þis p*rouer*be is seyd ful soth
him þar nat^{t} weene wel þat^{t} yuel doþ [leaf 61] 4320
A gilour schal himself^{t} begyled be/
And god þat^{t} sitteþ highe in mageste/
Saue all̄ þis companye grete and smale
Thus haue I quytte þe meller in my tale 4324

[*No gap in the MS.*]

The Cook' of londoñ whil þe Reue spak'
ffor ioye he þoughte he clawed him on þe bak'
ha ha quod he for cristes passioun
This meller haþ a scharp conclusioun
vpon his argument of' herbergage
We[l] seide Salamon in his langage/
Ne bryng' nat euery man in to þin hous
ffor herberwyng' be night' is perilous
Wel oughte a man auysed for to be
Whom þat' he broughte in to his priuite
I praie to god so yeue me sorwe and care
If' euere sithen I highte hogge of' of' ware
herde I mellere bettre y-set a werke
he hadde a Iape of' malice in þe derke/
And þerfore if' ȝe vouche sauf' to heere/
But' god forbede þat' we stynte heere
A tale of' me þat' am a pouere man
I wol yow telle as wel as euer I can
A litel Iape þat' fil in oure Citee
Oure oost' answerde and seide I graunte it þe
Now telle on Roger loke þat' it' be good
ffor many a paste hast þou latyn blood
And many a Iakke of' Douer hast þou sold
That' haþ ben twyes hoot' and twyes cold
Of' many pilgrym hastow cristes curs
ffor of' þy persely ȝit' þey fare þe wors
þat' þei haue eten wiþ þe stubbul goos
ffor in þy schoppe is many a flye loos
Now tel on gentil Roger by þi name
But' yet I preye þe be not' wroþ for game
A man may say ful soth in game and play
Thou seist' ful soþ quod Roger by my fay [leaf 61, back]

But soþ play quad play as þe flemyng seith
And þerfore herry baillyf by þi feith
Be þou nouȝt wroth or we departen heere
Though þat my tale be of an Ostelleere
But naþeles I wol not tellen it ȝit
But or we parte I-wys þou schalt be quyt
And þer wiþ al he lough and made cheere/
And saide his tale as ȝe schal after heere

[*No gap in the MS.*]

Incipit fabula C^o iiij^m

A Prentys whilom dwelled in oure Citee
And of' a craft' of' vitaillers was he
Gaillard he was as goldfynch in þe schawe
Broun as a berye a *pro*pur schort' felawe/
Wiþ lokkes blake y-kempt' ful fetysly
Daunce he couthe so wel and Iolyly
That he was cleped Perkyn Reuolour
he was as ful of' loue *par*amour
As is þe hyue ful of' hony sweete
Wel was þe wenche with him mighte meete
At' euery brydale wolde he synge and hoppe
he louede bet' þe tauerne þan þe schoppe
ffor-whan þer any rydyng' was in chepe
Out' of' þe schoppe þider wolde he leepe
Til þat' he hadde al þe sigħt' y-seyn
And daunced wel wolde he not' come ageyn
And gadered him a meyne of' his sorte
To hoppe and synge and maken such desporte
And þere þei setten steuene for to mete
To pleyen atte dys in such a streete
ffor in þe toun nas þer no prentys
That' fairere couþe caste a paire of' dys :
Than P*er*kyn couþe and þer-to he was fre
Of' his dispense in place of' priuite/
That' fond his maister wel in his chaffare/
ffor ofte tyme he fond his box ful bare
ffor sikerly a prentys Reuelour [leaf 62]
That' haunteþ dys ryot' or *par*amour
his maister schal it' in his schoppe abeye
Al haue he not' part' of' þe menstralcye
ffor theft' and riot' þei ben conuertible
Al conne he play on gyterne or Rubible

Reuel and trouthe as in a lough degre
þey been ful wroþe alday as men may se
This Iolif' prentys with his maister bood
Til he were neigh out of' his prentyshood
Al were he snybbed boþe erly and late
And som tyme lad with Reuel to Newgate
But atte last' his mayster him biþoughte
vpon a day whan he his paper soughte
Of' a prouerbe þat' seiþ þis same word
Wel bette is roten appul out' of' hord
þan þat' it' rotye al þe remenant
So fareþ it by þe riotous seruant
It is ful lasse harm to late it pace
þanne he schende all þe seruantz in þe place
Therfore his mayster 3af' him a quitance
And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance
And þus þis Ioly prentys hadde his leue
Now lat' him riote al þe night' or leue
And for þer nys no þeef' wiþouten a lowke
That' helpeþ him to wasten and to sowke/
Of' þat' he brybe can or borwe may
Anon he sente his bedde and his array
vnto a Coupere of his owne sorte
That' louede dys and Reuel and disporte
And hadde a wyf' þat' heeld for contynance/
A schoppe / and swyued for hire sustynance.

[*No break in the MS.*]

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

[THE SPURIOUS TALE OF GAMELYN.]

Incipit ffabula/

LIthen & lestenep and herkenep aright'
And ȝe schulle heeren of' a doughty knight'
Sire Iohñ of' Boundys was his name
he coupe of norture and mochil of game.
Thre sones þe knight' hadde and with his body he hem wan
The eldest' was a moche schrewe and sone he bigan [leaf 62]
his breþeren loued wel here fader and of' him were agast'
The eldest' deserueþ his faderes curs & hadde it atte last'
The goode knight' his fader lyued so yore
That' deþ was comen him to and handlid him ful sore/
The goode knight' cared sore sik' þer he lay
how hise children schulde lyuen after his day
he hadde ben wyde wher but' non housbond he was
Alle þe lond þat' he hadde it' was verrey purchas
ffayn he wolde it were dressed among' hem alle
That' eche of' hem hadde his part' as it mighte falle
Tho sente he in to contre after wise knightes
To helpen delen his londes and dressen hem to rightes
he sent' hem word by lettres þey scholden hyȝe blyue
If' þey wolde speke wiþ him whil he was on lyue

Tho þe knightes herden seek' þat' he lay
hadde þei no reste neiþer night' ne day
Til þei comen to him þer he lay stille
On his deþ bedde to abyde goddes wille
Thanne seyd þe goode knight' syk' þer he lay
lerdes I ȝou warne for soþe wiþouten nay
I may no lengere lyuen heer in þis stounde
ffor þorugh goddes wille deth draweþ me to grounde/
Ther nas noon of' hem all þat' herde him aright
That' þay hadden reuþe of' þat ilke knight'
And seyde sire for goddes loue dismaye ȝou nought'
God may don boote of' bale þat' is now y-wrought'
Than spak' þe goode knight' sike þer he lay
Boote of' bale god may sende I wot' it is no nay
But' I beseke ȝou knightes for þe loue of' me
Goþ and dresseth my lond among' my sones þre
And for þe loue of' god deleþ hem nat' amys
And forȝeteþ nought' Gamelyn my ȝonge sone þat' is
Takeþ heede to þat' oon as wel as to þat' oþer
Seelde ȝe see ony heir helpen his broþer
Tho leeten þey þe knight' lyen þat' was not in hele [leaf 63]
And wenten in to counseill his londes for to dele/
ffor to delen hem all to oon was here þought
And for gamelyn was yongest' he scholde haue nought'
Alle þe lond þat' þer was þai dalten it in' tuo
And leeten Gamelyn þe ȝonge wiþoute lond go
And ech of' hem seyde to oþer ful loude
his breþeren mowe ȝiue him lond whan he good coude
Whan þei hadde deled þe lond at' here wille
Thei camen to þe knight' þere he lay ful stille
And tolden him anon how þei hadden wrought
And þe knight' þer he lay liked it' right' nought'
Than seide þe knight' by seint' Martyn
ffor al þat' ȝe haue don ȝit' is þe lond myn
ffor goddes loue neighebours stondeþ alle stille
And I wol dele my lond right' after my wille/

Iohñ myn eldeste sone schal haue plowes fyue
That' was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyue
And my myddelest' sone fyue plowes of' londe
That' I halp for to geten with my right' honde
And all myn oþer purchas of' londes and leedes
That' I bequeþe Gamelyn and all my goode steedes
And I beseke ȝou goode men þat' lawe conne of londe
ffor Gamelynes loue þat' my bequeste stonde
Thus dalte þe knight' his lond by his day
Right' on his deþ bedde sik' þer he lay
And sone afterward he lay stoon stille
And deyde whan tyme com as it' was cristes wille
Anon as he was deed and vnder gras graue
Sone þe oldere broþer gylede þe yonge knaue
he took' in to his hond his lond and his leede
And Gamelyn himselue to cloþen and to feede
he cloþed him and fedde him yuel and eek' wroþe
And leet' his londes and his houses boþe
his parkes and his woodes and dede no þing' wel
And sethen he it aboughte on his faire fel
So longe was Gamelyn in his broþeres halle [leaf 63, back]
ffor þe strengeste of' good þei douteden him alle
Ther was non þer-Inne nowþer ȝong' ne olde
That' wolde wraþþe Gamelyn were he neuer so bolde
Gamelyn stood on a day in his broþeres ȝerde/
And bygan with his hond to handlen his berde
he þought' on his londes þat' layen vnsawe
And his faire Okes þat' doun were drawe
his parkes were broken and his deere reued
Of' all his goode steedes non was him bileued
hise houses were vnhiled and ful yuel dight'
Tho þoughte Gamelyn it' wente nought' aright'
Afterward cam his broþer walkynge þare
And seyde to Gamely is oure mete yare
Tho wraþþed him Gamelyn and swor by goddes book'
þou schalt' go bake þi self I wol not' be þi cook'

how broþer Gamelyn / how answerest þou now
Thou spake neuer such a word as þou dost now
By my faiþ sayde Gamelyn now me þinkeþ neede
Of alle þe harmes þat I haue I took neuer are heede
My parkes ben y-broken and my deer bireued
Of myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileued
Alle þat my fader me biquaþ al goþ to schame
And þer fore haue þou goddes curs broþer by þy name
Thanne bispak his broþer þat rape was of rees
Stond stille gadelyng and hold right þi pees/
Thou schalt be fayn for to haue þi mete and þi wede
What spekest þou Gamelyn of lond oþer of leede
Than seyde Gamelyn þe child þat was ying
Cristes curs mote he haue þat clepeþ me gadelyng
I am no worse gadelyng ne no worse wight
But born of a lady and geten of a knight
Ne durste he not to Gamelyn neer a foote go
But clepede to him his men and seyde hem þo
Goþ and beteþ þis body and reueþ him his wit/
And lat him lere anoþer tyme to answere me bet
Than seyde þe child yonge Gamelyn [leaf 64 *a*]
Cristes curs mot þou haue broþer art/ þou myn
And if I schal algate be beten anon
Cristes curs mote þou haue but þou be þat oon
And anon his broþer in þe grete hete
Made his men to fette staues Gamelyn to beete
Whan þat euerych of hem hadde a staf I-nomen
Gamelyn was war þo he seigh hem comen
Tho Gamelyn seigh hem comen he loked ouer all
And was war of a pestel stood vnder a wall
Gamelyn was light and þider gan he lepe
And drof alle his broþeres men right soone on an heepe
he loked as a leon a layde on good won
Tho his broþer seigh þat he bigan to gon
he fleigh vp in til a loft and schette þe dore fast
Thus Gamelyn wiþ his pestelle made hem agast

Somme for gamelynes loue and some for his eye
Alt̄ þei drowen by halues þo he bigan to pleye
What' now seyde Gamelyn yuel mot' þou þee
Wil ye bigynne contek' and so soone flee
Gamelyn sought' his brop̄er' whider he was flowe
And saugh wher he loked out' at' a wyndowe
Brop̄er saide Gamelyn come a litel neer
And I wil teche þe a play atte Bokeleer
his brop̄er him answerde and sayde be seint' Richere
Whil þe pestel is in þin hond I wol come no neer
Brop̄er I wel make þy pees I swere by cristes oore/
Cast' a-way þe pestel and wrapþe þe nomore
I moot' neede sayde Gamelyn wrapþe me at oones
ffor þou wolde make þi men to breke my boones
Ne hadde I had mayn and might' in myn armes
To haue hem driuen fro me þei wolde haue do me harmes
Gamelyn sayd his brop̄er be þou nought' wrop̄
ffor to see þe haue harm were me right' lop̄
I dide it nought' brop̄er but' for a fondyng'
ffor for to loken or þou were strong' *and* art' so ȝing'
Com a doun þan to me and *grau*nte me my boone [leaf 64 a, back]
Of' þing' I wol þe asken and we schul saughte soone
Doun þan cam his brop̄er þat' fikel was and felle
And was swithe sore agast' of' þe pestelle
he seyde brop̄er Gamelyn aske me þy boone
And loke þou me blame but I it' *grau*nte soone
Thanne seyde Gamelyn brop̄er y-wys
And we schulle ben at' on þou most me *grau*nte þis
Al þat' my fader me biquath whil he was on lyue
Thou most' do me it haue if' we schulle nouȝt' stryue
That' schalt' þou haue Gamelyn I swere by cristes oore
Al þat' þi fader þe byquath þough̄ þou woldest' haue more
Thi lond þat' lieth laye wel it schal be sowe
And þine houses reised vp þat' ben y-leyd so lowe
Thus sayde þe knight' to Gamelyn by moupe
And þoughte of' falsnesse as he wel coupe

The knight' þought' on tresoñ and Gamelyn on noon
And went' and kissed his broþer and when þey weren at' oon
Allas yonge Gamelyn noþing' he ne wist'
Wiþ such fals tresoun his broþer him kist/
liþeneth and lesteneþ and holdeþ youre tonge
And ȝe schul heere talkyng' of' gamelyn þe ȝonge
Ther was þer besyden cried a wrastelyng'
And þer fore þer was vp y-set' a Ram and a ryng'
And Gamelyn was in wille to wende þerto
ffor to preuen his might' what' he couþe doo
Broþer seyde Gamelyn by seint' Richer
Thou most' lene me to night' a litel courser
That' is freissch to þe spores on for to ryde
I moste on an Erande a litel here besyde/
By god seyde his broþer of' steedes in my stalle
Go and chese þe þe beste spare non of alle
Of' steedes or of' coursers þat' stonden him bysyde
And telle me goode broþer whider þou wolt' ryde
here besyde broþer is cryed a wrastlyng'
And þerfore schal be sette a Ram and a Ryng'
Moche worschipe it were broþer to vs alle [1. af 64 b]
Might' I þe Ram and þe ryng' bryngen hom to þis halle
A steede þer was sadeled smartly and skeet'
Gamelyn dide a paire spores fast' on his feet
he sette his foot' in þe styrop þe steede he bistrood
And toward þe wrastelyng' þe ȝonche child rood
Tho Gamelyn þe ȝonge was ryden out' atte gate
The false knight' his broþer loked it after þate
And bisoughte ihesu crist' þat is heuen king'
he mighte breke his necke in þat' wrastlyng'
As sone as gamelyn com ther þe place was
he lighte doun of' his steede and stood on þe gras
And þere he herde a ffrankelyn wayloway syng'
And bigan bitterly his hondes for to wryng'
Goode man seide Gamelyn whi makest' þou þis fare
Is þer noman þat' may ȝou helpen out' of' þis care

Allas seide þis ffrankleyn þat euer was I bore
ffor tweye stalworþe sones I wene þat I haue lore
A champioñ is in þe place þat haþ y-wrought me sorwe
ffor he haþ slayn my tuo sones but if god hem borwe
I wolde ȝiue ten pound by ihesu crist and more
Wiþ þe nones I fand a man to handelen him sore
Goode man seide Gamelyn wilt þou wel done
hold myn hors whil my man draweþ of my schone
And help my man to kepe my cloþes and my steede
And I wil in to þe place gon to loke if I may speede
By god seide þe ffrankeleyn it schal be doon
I wol my self be þy man to drawen of þi schoon
And wende þou in to þe place ihesu crist þe speede
And drede not of þi cloþes nor of þi goode steede
Barfot and vngert Gamelyn in came
Alle þat were in þe place heede of him þei name
how he dorste auntre him of him to don his mig̃t
That was so doughty a champioun in wrastelyng and in fig̃t
vp sterte þe Champioun rapely anon
Toward ȝonge Gamelyn he bigan to goon
And seide who is þi fader and who is þi sire/ [leaf 61 b, back]
ffor soþe þou art a gret fool þat þou come hire/
Gamelyn answerde þe Champioun þo/
Thou knewe wel my fader whil he couþe goo
Whiles he was on lyue by seint Martyn
Sire Io℞ñ of Boundes was his name and I Gamelyn
ffelawe seide þe Champioun so mote I þriue
I knew wel þi fader whil he was on lyue
And þi self Gamelyn I wol þat þou it heere
Whil þou were a ȝong boy a moche schrewe þou were/
Than seide Gamelyn and swor by cristes oore
Now I am oldere woxe þou schalt fynde me a more
By god sayde þe champiōñ welcome mote þou be/
Come þou ones in myn hond schalt þou neuer þe
It was wel wiþinne þe nig̃t and þe moone schon
Whan Gamelyn and þe Champiōñ togidere gonne gon

The champioun caste tornes to Gamelyn þat' was preste
And Gamelyn stood stille and bad him don his beste
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe champioun
Thou art' faste aboute to bringe me doun
Now I haue proued many tornes of' þine
Thou most' he seyde prouen on or tuo of' myne
Gamelyn to þe champiōn yede smertly anoon
Of' alle þe turnes þat' he couþe he schewed him but oon
And kast' him on þe left' syde þat' þe ribbes to-brak'
And þarto his oon arm þat' yaf' a gret' crak'
þan seyde Gamelyn smertly anoon
Schal it be holde for a cast' or elles for noon
By god seyde þe champioun wheþer þat' it be
he comeþ oones in þin hond schal he neuer þe
Than seyde þe ffrankelein þat' hadde his sone þere/
Blessed be þou Gamelyn þat' euer þou bore were
The ffrankeleyn seide to þe champiōn of' him stod him non eye
This is ȝonge Gamelyn þat' taughte þe þis pleye
Aȝein answerde þe Champioun þat' liked noþing welle
he is oure alþer maister and his pley is right' felle/
Siþeñ I wrastlede ferst' it' is y-go ful yore [leaf 65]
But I was neuere my lyf' handled so sore
Gamelyn stood in þe place alone wiþoute sirk'
And sayde if' þer be moo lat' hem come to werke
The champiōn þat' payned him to werke so sore
It' semeth by his continance þat' he wol no more
Gamelyn in þe place stood stille as a stoon
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Ther was non with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more
ffor he handled þe Champiōn so wonderliche sore/
Tuo gentil men yemede þe place
Come to Gamelyn god ȝiue him goode *grace*
And sayden to him do on þin hosen and þi schoon
ffor soþe at' þis tyme þis faire is y-done
And þanne sayde Gamelyn so moot' I wel fare
I haue nought' ȝit' haluendel sold my ware/

Tho sayde þe Champiõñ so brouke I my sweere
He is a fool þat' þer-of' byeþ þou sellest it so deere
Tho saide þe ffrankeleyn that was in moche care/
ffelawe he sayde whi lakkest' þou his ware/
By seint' Iame in Galeys þat' many man haþ sought'
yit' it' is to good chepe þat' þou hast' y-bought'
Tho þat' wardeynes were of' þat' wrastlyng'
Come and broughte Gamelyn þe Ram & þe ryng'
And sayde haue gamelyn þe Ring' and þe Ram
ffor þe beste wrastelere þat' euer heere cam
¶ Thus wan Gamely þe Ram and þe Ryng'
And wente with moche Ioye hom in þe mornyng'
his broþer seigh wher he cam wiþ þe grete route
And bad schitte þe gate and holde him wiþoute
þe porter of' his lord was sore agast'
And stert' anon to þe gate and lokked it fast'
Now liþeþ and lesteneþ boþe ȝong' and olde/
And ȝe schul heere game of' Gamelyn þe bolde/
Gamelyn com þer for to haue come In
Than was it' schett' faste wiþ a pyn
Thanne seyde Gamelyn porter vndo þe gate/
ffor many a good mannes sone stondeþ þerate [leaf 65, back]
Than answerd þe porter and swor' by goddes berde
Thou ne schalt' Gamelyn come in to þis ȝerde
Thou lixt' sayde Gamelyn so brouke I my chyn
he smot' þe wiket' with his foot' and brak' away þe pyn
The porter seih þo it mighte no bettre be
he sette foot' on erþe he bigan to flee
By my faiþ sayde Gamelyn þat' trauaile is lore
ffor I am of' foote as light' as þou þough þou haddest swore
Gamelyn ouertok' þe porter and his teene wrak'
And gert' him in þe necke þat' þe boon tobrak'
And took' him by þat' oon arm and þrew him in a welle/
vij. fadmen it' was deep as I haue herd telle/
Whan Gamelyn þe yonge þus hadde playd his play
Alle þat' in yerde weren drewen hem a-way

þei dredden him ful sore for wreke þat he wroughte
And for þe faire companye þat he þider brought
Gamelyn 3ede to þe gate and leet [it] vp wyde
he leet hem in alle þat gone wolde or ryde
And seyde 3e be welcome wiþouten eny greeue
ffor we wiln ben maisteres heere and aske no man leeue
yesterday I lefte seyde 3onge Gamelyn
In my broþer seler .v. tonne of wyn
I wol not þis companye parten a twynne
And ye wol doon after me whil ony sope is þrinne
And if my broþer grucche or make foul cheere
Oþer for spense of mete *and* drink þat we spenden heere/
I am oure catour and bere oure alþer purce
he schal haue for his grucching seint maries curse
My broþer is a negoñ I swere by cristes oore
And we wol spende largely þat he haþ spared yore
And who þat maketh grucching þat we heere dwelle/
he schal to þe porter in to þe drawe welle/
vij. dayes and seue night Gamelyn heeld his feeste/
With mochel solace was þere and no cheste/
In a litel toret his broþer lay steke
And seigh hem wasten his good but durst he not speke [leaf 66]
Erly on a mornyng on þe viij^e. day
The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here way
lordes sayde Gamelyn wil ye so hye
Alle þe wyn is not yet drunken so brouk I myn ye
Gamelyn in his herte was wel woo
Whanne his gestes toke hire leue from him for to goo
he wolde þei hadde dwelled lenger *and* þai saide nay
But bitaughten Gamelyn god and good day
Thus maade Gamelyn his feeste and brought it wel to eende
And after his gestes tok leue to wende
litheþ and lesteneþ and holdeþ 3oure tonge
And 3e schul heere gamen of Gamelyn þe 3onge
herkeneth lordynges and listeneth aright
Whan alle gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight

All þe whil þat Gamelyn held his mangerie
his broþer þought' on him be wreke with his treccherie
Tho Gamelynes gestes were riden and y-gon
Gamelyn stood anoon allone frend had he noon 348
Tho after ful soone wiþinne a litel stounde
Gamelyn was taken and ful harde bounde
fforþ com þe false knight' out' of' þe sellere
To Gamelyn his broþer he ȝede ful neere 352
And seyde to Gamelyn who made þe so bold
ffor to stroyen my stoore of' myn houshold
Broþer sayde Gamelyn wraþþe þe right' nouȝt'
ffor it is many day go siþþen it' was bought' 356
ffor broþer þou hast' had by seint' Richer
Of' fiftene plowes of' lond þis xvj. ȝer
And of' alle þe beestes þou hast' forþ bred
That' my fader me byquath on his deth bed 360
Of' alle þis .xvj. ȝeer I yiue þe þe prow/
ffor þe mete and þe drink' þat' we haue spended now
Thanne seyde þe false knight' yuel mote he þee
herkne broþer Gamelyn what' I wol yiue þee/ 364
ffor of' my body broþer geten heer haue I noon
I wil make þe myn heir I swere by sein Ioħñ [leaf 66, back]
Par ma fay seyde Gamelyn and it so bee
And þou þenke as seist' god ȝelde it þe 368
No þing' wiste Gamelyn of' his broþeres gile
Ther-fore he him begiled in a litel while/
Gamelyn seyde he o þing' I þe telle
Tho þou þrewe my porter in to þe drawe welle 372
I swoor in þat' wraþþe and in þat grete moot
þat' þou scholdest' be bounde boþe hand and foot
Therfore I þe beseche broþer Gamelyn
Lat' me nought' be forsworne broþer artow myn 376
Lat' me bynde þe boþe hand and foote
ffor to halde myn avow as I þe bihoote
Broþer seyde Gamelyn as so mote I þee
Thou schalt' nought' be forsworne for þe loue of' me 380

Tho maden þei gamelyn to sitte might' he not' stonde
Til þei hadden him bounde/ boþe foot' and honde
The false knight' his broþer of' Gamelyn was agast'
And sente after feteres to feteren him atte last
his broþer made lesynges on him þer he stood
And tolde hem þat comen In that' Gamelyn was wood
Gamelyn stood to a post bounden in þe halle/
Tho that' comen in lokeden on him alle
Euer stood Gamelyn euen vpright'
But mete and drink' hadde he noon noþer day ne night'
Thanne sayde Gamelyn broþer by myn hals
Now I haue aspied þou art' a party fals
hadde I wist' þat' tresoñ þat' þou haddest y-founde
I wolde haue youe strokes or I hadde be bounde
Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny stoon
Tuo daies and tuo nightes mete hadde he noon
Thanne sayde Gamelyn þat stood y-bounde stronge
Adam spenser me þink' I faste to longe
Adam þe spenser now I beseche þe
ffor þe moche loue my fader loued þe
If' þou may come to þe kayes leese me out' of' bonde
And I schal parte wiþ þe of my free londe [leaf 67]
Thanne sayde adam þat' was þe spenser
I haue serued þi broþer þis .xvj. 3er
If' I lete þe gon out' of' his boure
he wolde say afterward I were a traitour
Adam seyde Gamelyn so brouke I myn hals
þou schalt' fynde my broþer atte laste right fals/
Ther-fore broþer adam loose me out of' bondes
And I wil parte with þe of' my free londes
vp swich a forward seide adam y-wys/
I wol do þerto al þat' in me is
Adam seyde Gamelyn also mote I þee
I wil holde þe couenañt and þou wil lose me
Anon as adames lord to bedde was y-goon
Adam tok' þe kayes and leet' Gamelyn out a-non

He vnlokked Gamelyn boþe handes *and* feet
In hope of auañcemen*t* þat' he him biheet •
Thanne seide Gamelyn þanked be goddes sonde
Now I am loosed boþe foot' and honde
hadde I now eten and drunken aright
Ther is non in þis hous schulde bynde me þis night
Ad*a*m took' Gamelyn stille as stille as eny stoon
And ladde him in to spense rapely and anoon)
And sette him to soper right' in a priue stede
he bad him do gladly and Gamelyn so dede
Anon as Gamelyn hadde eten wel and fyn
And þerto y-dronke wel of' þe reede wyn
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn what' is now þy rede
ffor I go to my broþer and gyrde of' his hede
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m it schal nouȝt' be so
I can teche þe a reede þat' is worth þe tuo
I wot' wel for soþe þat' þis is no nay
We schulle haue a mangery right' on sonday
Abbotes and Pr*i*ours many heer schal be
And oþer men of' holy chirche as I telle þe
þou schalt' stonde vp by þe poste as þou were hond fast'
And I schal leue þam vnloke þat' away þou may hem caste
Whan þat' þei haue eten and wasshen here hondes [lf 67, bk]
Thou schalt' biseke hem alle to bringe þe out' of' bondes
And if' þei wil borwe þe þat' were good game
Thanne were þou out' of' pr*i*soñ and I out' of' blame
And if' ech of' hem sey to vs nay
I schal don anoþ*er* I swere by þis day
Thou schalt' haue a good staff/ and I wol haue anoþ*er*
And cristes curs haue þat' oon) þat' failleþ þat' oþ*er*
Ya for gode seyde Gamelyn I say it' for me
If' I faile on my syde yuele mote I þe
If' we schulle algate assoile hem of' here synne
Warne me broþer ad*a*m whan we schul begynne
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m by seinte charite/
I wil warne þe biforn whan þat' it' schal be

Whan I twynk' on þe loke for to gone
And cast' awey þe fetteres and come to me anoon
Adam seyde Gamelyn blessed be þy boones
That' is a good counsail yeuyng' for þe nones
If' þey werne me to bringe me out' of' boendes
I wol sette goode strokes right' on here lendes
Tho þe sonday was y-come and folk' to þe feeste
ffaire þei were welcomed boþe leste and meeste
And euere as þey atte haⱡ dore comen In
Thay caste þair yhe on ȝonge Gamelyn
The false knight' his broþer and ful of' trecchery
Alle þe gestes þat' þer were atte mangery
Of' Gamelyn his broþer he tolde hem with mouþe/
Aⱡ þe harme and þe schame þat' he telle couþe
Tho þei were serued of' messes tuo or þre
Thanne seyde Gamelyn how serue ȝe me/
It' is not' wel *ser*ued by god þat' al made
That' I sitte fastyng' and oþer men make *hem* glade
The fals knight' his broþer þere þat' he stood
Tolde aⱡ his gestes þat Gamelyn was wood
And Gamelyn stood stille and answerde nought
But' adames wordes he heeld in his þought' [leaf 68]
Tho Gamelyn gan speke dolfully wiþ alle
To þe grete lordes þat' saten in þe halle
lordes he seyde for cristes passioñ
help to brynge Gamelyn out of' *pri*soñ
Thanne seyde an abbot' sorwe on his cheeke
he schal haue cristes curs and seinte maries eeke
That' þe out' of' *pri*soun beggeth or borweth
But' euere worþe hem wel þat' doþ þe moche sorwe
After þat' abbot' þan spak' anoþer
I wolde þin hed were offe þey þou were my broþer
Alle þat' þe borwe foule moot' þam falle
Thus þei seide alle þat' weren in þe halle
Than seyde a *pri*our yuel mote he þriue
It' is moche sorwe & and skaþe boy þat' þou art on lyue

Ow seyde Gamelyn so ꝥrouke I my bon
Now I haue aspied ꝥat' freendes haue I noon
Cursed mot' he worthe boꝺe fleisshe and blood
That euere do priour or abbot' eny good
Adam ꝥe spenser took' vp ꝥe cloꝺe
And loked on Gamelyn and seih ꝥat' he was wroth
Adam on ꝥe Pantrie litul he ꝥought'
But' tuo goode staues to halle dore he brought'
Adam looked on Gamelyn and he was war anon
And cast' awey ꝥe feteres and he bygan to goon
Tho he cam to adam he took' ꝥat' oo staf'
And bigan to worche and goode strokes yaf'
Gamleyn cam in to ꝥe halle and ꝥe spencer bothe
And loked hem aboute as ꝥei hadde be wroꝺe
Gamelyn sprengeꝺ holy water with an ook spire
That' somme ꝥat' stoode vpright' felle in the fire
Ther was no lewed man ꝥat' in ꝥe halle stood
That' wolde do Gamelyn any ꝥing' but' good
But' stooden besyden and lete hem boꝺe werche
ffor ꝥei hadde no reuꝺe of' men of' men of' holy cherche
Abbot' or priour monk' or chanoñ
That' Gamelyn ouertok' anon ꝥei ȝeden doun) [leaf 68, back]
Ther was non of' hem alle ꝥat' wiꝺ his staf' mette
That' he made hem ouerꝺrowe and quitte hem his dette
Gamelyn sayde adam for sainte charite/
Pay good lyueray for ꝥe loue of' me
And I wol kepe ꝥe dore so euer heere I masse/
Er ꝥei ben assoiled ꝥer schal non passe
Dout' ꝥe nouȝt' seide Gamelyn) whil we ben in feere/
Kepe ꝥou wel ꝥe dore and I wol werche heere
Stere good adam and late ꝥer none flee
And we schulle telle largely how many ꝥer be
Gamelyn seyde adam do hem but' good
Thay ben men of' holy che[rche] draw of' hem no blood
Saue wel ꝥe croune and do hem non harmes
But' breke boꝺe here legges and siꝺꝺen here armes

Thus Gamelyn and adam wroughte right' faste/
And pleyden with þe monkes and made hem agaste/
Thider þey come rydyng' Iolyly wiþ swaynes
And hom aȝein þei were ledde in Cartes *and in* waynes
Tho þei hadden alle y-don þan seyde a gray frere
Allas sire abbot' what' dide we now heere
Tho þat' we comen hider it was a cold rede
vs hadde ben better at' home wiþ water and wiþ breed
Whil Gamelyn made ordres of' monkes and freere/
Euer stood his broþer and made foul cheere
Gamelyn vp wiþ his staf' þat' he wel knew
And gerte him in þe nekke þat' he ouerþrew
A litel aboue þe girdel þe riggebon tobarst'
And sette him in þe feteres þer he sat' arst'
Sitte þere broþer seyde Gamelyn
ffor to coole þi blood as I dide myn
As swiþe as þei hadde wroken hem on here foon
They askede water and wisshen anoon
What' so*m*me for here loue and so*m*me for awe
Alle þe se*r*uantz serued hem of' þe beste lawe
The scherreue was þenne but fyue myle/
And al was told him in a litel while/ [leaf 69]
how Gamelyn and ad*a*m hadde don a sory res
Bounden and wounded men aȝein þe kinges pees
Tho bigan sone strif' for to wake
And þe scherref' aboute Gamelyn for to take
Now lithe þ and lestene þ so god ȝiue ȝou good fyn
And ȝe schul heere good game of' ȝonge Gamelyn
ffour and twenty ȝonge me*n* þat' helden ful bolde
Come to þe scherref' and seyde þat' þai wolde
Gamelyn and ad*a*m fette be way
The scherref' yaf' hem leue soþ as I ȝou say
þei hieden faste wolde þay nought' belynne
Til þei comen to þe gate þer gamelyn was Inne
They knokken on þe gate þe porter was ney
And loked out' at' an hole as man þat was sleigh

The porter hadde beholde þam a litel while
he louede Gamelyn and was adrad of gile/
And leet þe wiket stonde ful stille
And asked hem wiþoute what was here wille
ffor all þe grete company þanne spak but oon
Vndo þe gate porter and lat vs In goon
Than seyde þe porter so brouke I my chynne
ȝe schul sey ȝour erand er ȝe comen Inne
Sey to Gamelyn and adam if þeir wille be
We wol speke to hem two wordes or þre
ffelaw sayde þe porter stond þere stille
And I wol wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille
In wente þe porter to Gamelyn anon
And saide sire I warne ȝou here ben come ȝoure foon
The scherreues men ben atte gate
ffor to take ȝou boþe schulle ȝe not scape
Porter seyde Gamelyn so mote I wel þe
I wol allowe þe þi wordes whan I my tyme see
Go aȝein to þe gate and dwelle wiþ hem a while/
And þou schalt see right soone porter a gyle
Adam seyde Gamelyn loke þe to goone
We haue foomen atte gate and freendes neuer oone [leaf 69, back]
It ben þe scherreues men þat hider ben y-come/
Thei ben swore to-gidere þat we schul be nome
Gamelyn saide adam hye þe right blyue
And if I faile þe þis day yuel mote I þriue
And we schulle so welcome þe Scherreues men
That somme of hem schulle make here beddes in þe fen
Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out wente
And a good cart staf in his hond he hente
Adam hente soone anoþer gret staf
ffor to helpe Gamelyn and goode strokes he ȝaf
Adam felde tweyne and Gamelyn felde þre
That oþer sette feet on erþe and bigan to flee
What seide adam so euere heere I masse/
I haue right good wyn / drynke or ȝe passe

Nay by god sayde þai þi drink' is not' good
It' wolde make a mannes brayn to lyen in his hood
Gamelyn stood stille and loked him aboute
And saide þe scherref' comeþ with a gret' route
Adam seide Gamelyn what' be now þy redes
here comeþ þe scherreue and wil haue oure heedes
Adam sayde to Gamelyn my reed is now þis
Abyde we no longere if' we fare amys
I rede þat' we to woode goon ar þat' we be founde
Bettre is it' þer louse þan in toune y-bounde
Adam tok' by þe hond ȝonge Gamelyn
And euery of' hem drank' a draught' of' wyn
And after token here cours and wenten here way
Tho fond þe scherreue nest' and noon ay
The scherref' lighte doun and went' in to þe halle
And fond þe lord fetered faste wiþ alle
þe scherreue vnfetered him right' soone anon
And sente after a leche to hele his regge bon
lete we now þis false knight' lye in his care
And talke we of' Gamelyn and loke how he fare
Gamelyn in to þe woode stalkede stille
And adam þe spenser likede right' ylle [leaf 70]
Adam swore to Gamelyn by seint' richeer
Now I see it is mery to ben a spenser
That' leuere me were keyes to bere
Than walken in þis wilde woode my cloþes to tere
Adam sayde Gamelyn dismaye þe right' nought'
Many good mannes childe in care is brought'
As þei tooke talking' boþe in feere
Adam herde talking' of men and neigh him þought' þei were
Tho Gamelyn vnder woode loked aright'
vij. score of' ȝonge men he say wel adight'
Alle satte atte mete compas aboute
Adam sayde Gamelyn now haue ȝe no doute
After bale comes boote þorugh goddes might'
Me þinkeþ of' mete and drynk' þat' I haue a sight'

Adam lokede þo vnder woode bowgh
And þo he say mete he was glad ynough
ffor he hopede to god for to haue his deele
And he was sore alonged after a good meele
As he saide þat word þe mayster outlawe
Saugh Gamelyn and adam vnder woode schawe/
3onge men seyde þe maister by þe god roode
I am war of gestes god sende vs goode
3ond been tuo yonge men right wel adight
And peraventure þer ben mo who so loked aright
Ariseþ vp yonge men and sette hem to me
It is good þat we witen what men it be
vp þei sterten .vij. fro þe dyner
And metten with Gamelyn and adam spenser
Whan þei were neih hem þan seyde þat oon
yeldeþ vp yonge men 3our bowes & your floon
Thanne seide Gamelyn þat yong was of elde
Moche sorwe mote he haue þat to yow hem 3eelde
I corse non oþer but right my selue
þey 3e fette to yow fyue þanne ye be twelue
þo þei herde by his word þat might was in his arm
There was non of hem þat wolde don him harm [leaf 70, back]
But seide to gamelyn myldely and stille/
Com afore oure maister and say to him þi wille
yonge men seyde Gamelyn by your leute/
What man is 3our maister þat ye with be
Alle þei answerde wiþoute lesyng
Oure mayster is crouned of outlawes king
Adam sayde Gamelyn go we in cristes name/
he may neyþer mete ne drynk werne vs for schame/
If þat he be kynde and come of gentil [blood]
he wol yeue vs mete & drynk and don vs som good
By saint Iame saide adam what harm þat I gete/
I wol auenture me to þe dore þat I hadde mete/
Gamelyn and adam wente forþ in feere
And þei grette þe maister þat þey founde þere

Than seyde þe mayster kingꝰ ofꝰ outlawes
Whatꝰ seeke ȝe yonge men vnder þe woode schawes/
Gamelyn answerde þe kingꝰ wiþ his croune
he moste needes walke in woode þatꝰ may notꝰ walke in towne
Sire we walke notꝰ heere non harm to do
But ꝰ if we meete a deer to schete þer to
As men þatꝰ ben hungry and mowe no mete fynde
And ben harde bestad vnder woode lynde
Ofꝰ Gamelynes wordes þe mayster hadde rewþe
And seyde ye schal haue ynough haue god my treuþe
he bad hem sitte doun for to take reste
And bad hem ete and drynke and þatꝰ ofꝰ þe beste
As þei eeten and dronke wel and fyn
Than saide þatꝰ oon to þatꝰ oþer þis is Gamelyn
Tho was þe maister outꝰlawe in to counseil nome
And tolde how it / was Gamelyn þatꝰ þider was y-come
Anon as he herde how it was byfalle
he made him maister vnder him ouer he*m* alle
Wiþinne þe þridde weke him come tydynges
To þe mayster outlawe þatꝰ was here kynge*s*
þatꝰ he schulde come home his pees was maad
And ofꝰ þatꝰ goode tydyngꝰ he was ful glaad [leaf 71]
Tho sayde he to his ȝonge men soþ for to telle
Me ben comen tydynges I may no lenge*r* dwelle
Tho was Gamelyn anon wiþoute taryyngꝰ
Maad mayster outlawe and crouned here kingꝰ
Tho was Gamelyn crouned kingꝰ ofꝰ outꝰlawes
And walked a while vnder woode schawes
The false knightꝰ his broþer was scherreue and sire
And leetꝰ his broþer endite for hate and for Ire
Tho were his bonde men sory and noþingꝰ gladde
Whan Gamelyn here lord wolfes heed was cried and maad
And sente outꝰ ofꝰ his men wher þey mightꝰ him fynde
ffor to seeke Gamelyn vnder þe woode lynde
To tellen him tydynge*s* the wynd was wentꝰ
And alꝰ his good reued and his men schent

Whan þei had him founden on knees þey hem setten
And a-doun with here hood and here lord gretten
Sire wraþþe you nought for þe goode roode
ffor we haue brought 3ou tydynges but þei ben not goode
Now is þy broþer scherreue and haþ þe baillie
And haþ endited þe and wolfes heed doþ þe crye
Allas sayde Gamelyn þat euer I was so slak
That I ne hadde broke his necke þo I his rigge brak
Goþ greeteþ wel myn housbondes and wijf
I wil ben atte nexte schire haue god my lijf
Gamelyn cam wel redy to þe nexte schire
And þere was his broþer boþe lord and sire
Gamelyn com boldely in to þe moot halle
And putte adoun his hood among þe lordes alle
God saue yow lordynges þat now heere be
But broke bak Scherreue yuel mote þou þee
Why hast þou do me þat schame and vilenye
ffor to late endite me and wolues heed do me crye
Tho þoughte þe false knight for to ben awreke
And leet take Gamelyn most he nomore speke
Might þer be no more grace but Gamelyn atte laste/
Was cast in to prisoñ and fetered faste/ [leaf 71, back]
¶ Gamelyn haþ a broþer þat highte sire Oote
As good a knight and heende as mighte gon on foote
Anon 3eede a messager to þat goode knight
And told him altogider how Gamelyn was dight
Anon as sire Oote herde how Gamelyn was dight
he was right sory was he noþing light
And leet sadle a steede and þe way he nam
And to his tweyne breþeren right soone he cam
Sire sayde sire Ote to þe Scherreue þo
We ben but þre breþeren schulle we neuer be mo
And þou hast prisoned þe beste of vs alle
Swich anoþer broþer yuel him mote bifalle
Sire Ote seyde þe fals knight lat be þi curs
By god for þi wordes he schal fare þe wurs

To þe kinges prisone he is y-nome
And þer he schal abyde to þe Iustice come
Parde saide sire Ote bettre it schal be
I bidde him to maympr*is* þat' þou gr*a*unte to me
Til þe nexte sittyng' of deliuerance
And late þanne Gamelyn stande to his chaunce
Broþer in swich a forward I take him to þe
And by þi fader soule þat' þe bigat' and me
But' he be redy whan þe Iustice sitte
Thou schalt' bere his Iuggement' for all þi grete witte
I gr*a*unte wel seide sire Ote þat it' so be
let' deliuere him anon and tak' him to me
Tho was Gamelyn deliuered to sire Ote his broþ*er*
And þat' night' dwelleden þat' oon wiþ þat' oþer
On þe morwe seyde Gamelyn to sire Ote þe heende
Broþer he seyde I moot' for soþe fro þe weende
To loke how my yonge men leden here lyf'
Wheþer þey lyuen in Ioye or elles in strif'
By god seyde sire Ote þat' is a cold rede
Now I se þat' all þe cark' schal falle on myn hede
ffor whan þe Iustice sitte and þou be nought' y-founde
I schal anon be take and in þy stede y-bounde [leaf 72]
Broþer sayde Gamelyn dismaie þe nought'
ffor by saint' Iame in Gales that' many man haþ sought'
If' þat' god almighty holde me my lyf' and witte
I wil be þere redy whan þe Iustice sitte
Thanne seide sire Ote to Gamelyn god schilde þe fro schame
Com whan þou seest' tyme and bryng' vs out of' blame
¶ litheth and lesteneth and holdeþ ȝou stille
And ȝe schulle heere how Gamelyn hadde his wille
Gamelyn wente vnder þe woode Rys
And fond þere pleying' yonge men of' pris
Tho was yonge Gamelyn right' glad ynough
Whan he fond his men vnder þe woode bough
Gamelyn and his men talked in feere
And þey hadde good game here maister to heere/

his men tolden him of' auentures þat' þei hadde y-founde
And Gamelyn him tolde aȝein how he was faste bounde
Whil Gamelyn was outlawe hadde he no curs
Ther was no man þat' for him ferde þe wors
But' abbotes and p*r*iours monk' and Chanōn
On of' hem lefte he nought' whan he might' hem nom
Whil Gamelyn and his men made merþes Ryue
The false knight' his broþer yuel mote he þriue
ffor he was faste aboute boþe o day and oþer
ffor to hire þe queste to hangen his broþer
Gamelyn stood on a day and he biheeld
The woodes and þe schawes in þe wilde feeld
he þought' on his broþer how he him beheet
þat' he wolde be redy whan þe Iustice seet
he þoughte wel þat' he wolde wiþoute delay
Come afore þe Iustice to keepen his day
And seide to his yonge men dighte yow ȝare
ffor whan þe Iustice sitte we mote be þare
ffor I am vnder borwe til þat' I come/
And my broþer for me to prisoñ schal be nome
By seint' Iame seide his ȝonge men and þou rede þ*er*too
Ordeigne how it schal be and it schal be do [leaf 7?, back]
Whil Gamelyn was comyng' þer þe Iustice satte
The false knight' his broþer for-yatte he not' þatte
To hire þe men on his quest' to hangen his broþer
Though þey hadde nought' þat oon he wolde haue þat oþer
Tho cam Gamelyn fro vnder woode Rys
And broughte with him ȝonge men of' prys
I se wel seyde Gamelyn the Iustice is sette
Go aforn ad*a*m and loke how it spette
Ad*a*m wente in to þe hallė and loked all aboute
he seih þere stonde lordes boþe grete and stoute
And sire Ote his broþer fetered wel fast'
Tho went' ad*a*m out of' halle as he were agast
Ad*a*m seide to Gamelyn and to his felawes alle
Sire Ote stant' fetered in þe moot' halle

yonge men sayde Gamelyn þis þey heeren alle
Sire Ote stant' fetered in þe moot' halle
If' god yif vs grace wel for to do
he schal it' abegge þat' it broughte þerto
Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat lokkes hadde hore
Cristes curs most' he haue þat' him[1] bond so sore [1 four strokes to the m.]
And þou wolt' Gamelyn don after my reed
Ther is non in þe halle schal bere awey his heed
Adam seyde Gamelyn we wille nought' doon so
We wol sle þe gultyf' and late þe oþer go
I wil in to þe halle and wiþ þe Iustice speke
On hem þat' ben gultyf' I wol ben a-wreke
late non scape at' þe dore yonge men take yeme
ffor I wol be Iustice þis day doomes to deeme
God speede me þis day at' my newe werk'
Adam com with me for þou schalt' be my clerk'
his men answerde him and bad him don his best'
And if' þou to vs haue neede þou schalt' fynde vs preste
We wiln stande with þe whil þat we may dure
And but' we werken manly pay vs non hure
Yonge men sayde Gamelyn so mot' I wel þee/
As trusty a maister ye schal fynde of' me [leaf 73]
Right þer þe Iustice sat' in þe halle
In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle
Gamelyn leet' vnfettere his broþer out' of' bende
Thanne seide sire Otes his broþer þat' was heende
Thou haddest' almost' Gamelyn dwelled to longe
ffor þe queste is out' on me þat' I scholde honge
Broþer seide Gamelyn so god yif' me good rest
This day þey schul ben hanged þat' ben vpon þe quest'
And þe Iustice boþe þat' is þe Iugge man
And þe schirriue boþe þorugh him it bigan
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise
Now is þy power don þou most' nedes arise
Thou hast' yiuen doomes þat' ben yuel dight'
I wil sitten in þi sete and dressen hem aright

The Iustice sat' stille and roos nought' anoon)
And Gamelyn cleuede his cheke boon
Gamelyn tok' him in his armes and nomore spak'
But' þrewe him ouer þe barre and his arme tobrak' 852
Durste non to Gamelyn seye but' good
ffor fered of þe companye þat' wiþoute stood
Gamelyn sette hi*m* doun in þe Iustices sete
And sire Otes his broþer by hi*m* and ada*m* at his feet' 856
Whan Gamelyn was sette in þe Iustices sete/
herkne of' a bourde þat' Gamelyn dede
he leet' fetere þe Iustice and his false brother
And leet' hem come to þe barre þat' oon wiþ þat' oþer 860
Tho Gamelyn hadde þus y-don hadde he no rest
Til he hadde enquered who was on þe quest
ffor to deemen his broþer sire Otes for to honge
Er he wiste which þei were he þoughte ful longe 864
But' as sone as Gamelyn wiste wher þey were
he dede hem euerichon feteren in fere
And bringen hem to þe barre and sette hem in Rewe
By my faith seide þe Iustice þe Scherreue is a schrewe/ 868
Thanne sayde Gamelyn to þe Iustice
Thou hast' youe doomes of' þe wors assise [leaf 73, back]
And þe .xij. Sisours that' weren of' þe queste
They schulle ben hanged þis day so haue I good reste 872
Thanne seyde þe Scherreue to yonge Gamelyn
lord I crye þe mercy broþ*er* art' þou myn)
Ther-fore saide Gamelyn haue þou cristes curs
ffor and þou were maister yet' I schulde haue wors 876
ffor to make schort' tale and nought' to long'
he ordeigned him a queste of' his men so strong'
The Iustice and þe Scherreue beþ honged hye
To weiuen with þe Ropes and with þe wynd drye 880
And þe .xij Sisours sorwe haue þat' rekke
Alle þey were hanged faste by þe nekke
Thus endeth þe false knight' with his treccherie
That' euer hadde lad his lyf' in falsnes *and* folye 884

he was hanged by þe necke and nought' by þe purs
That' was þe meede þat' he hadde for his fadres curs
Sire Otes was eldest' and Gamelyn was ying'
Wenten with here frendes and passed with þe king' 888
They made pees with þe king' of' þe best' assise
The king' loued wel sire Ote and made him Iustice
And after þe king' made Gamelyn boþe in est' and west'
Cheef' Iustice of' his fre fforest' 892
Alle his wighte yonge men þe king' for-yaf' here gilt'
And sipþen in good office þe king' haþ alle hem pilt'
¶ Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede
And wrak' him of' his enemys and quitte hem here meede 896
And sire Ote his broþer made him his heir
And sipþen wedded Gamelyn a wyf' a good and a fair
They lyueden togidere whil þat' crist' wolde
And sipþen was gamelyn grauen vnder molde 900
And so schal we alle may þer noman flee
God bring' vs to þe Ioye þat' euer schal be AmeN pour charite

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[NOTICE—Inasmuch as, after the *Man of Law's Tale*, the order of the Tales in the *Corpus MS* differs from the right order of the Tales in which the *Six-Text* is to be arranged, the further issue of the separate Corpus Parts is suspended till all the Tales before the *Shipman's* in the Corpus MS have been issued in the *Six-Text*. Then the proper pagings of the separate Corpus sheets can be ascertained, and a large Part will be issued, bringing the separate issue abreast of the *Six-Text*. See the following scheme:—

Six-Text	*Corpus MS.*
rest of Group **B** { *SHIPMAN, Prioress, Thopas, Melibeus, Monk, Nun's Priest*	*Group* **F** 1 *Squire*
Group **C** { *Doctor, Pardoner*	*Group* **D** { *Wife of Bath, Friar, Summoner*
Group **D** { *Wife of Bath, Friar, Summoner*	*Group* **E** { *Clerk, Merchant*
Group **E** { *Clerk, Merchant*	*Group* **F** 2 *Franklin*
Group **F** { *Squire, Franklin*	*Group* **G** { *Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman*
Group **G** { *Second Nun, Canon's Yeoman*	*Group* **C** { *Doctor, Pardoner*
Group **H** *Manciple*	*rest of Group* **B** { *SHIPMAN, Prioress, Thopas, Melibeus, Monk, Nun's Priest*
Group **I** *Parson*	*Group* **H** *Manciple*
	Group **I** *Parson*]

1 *January*, 1871.

GROUP B. (α. FRAGMENT II.)

§ 1. MAN OF LAW'S HEAD-LINK.

CORPUS MS.

Owre oost' saugh wel þat' by þe brighte sonne .C^m.v^m.
The ark' of' his artificial day hadde ronne
The ferþe part' of' half' an hour and moore
And þough he were nought' deepe expert' in lore [leaf 74]
he wist' it was þe xviij.^e day
Of' Aprille þat' is messager to May
And saugh wel þat' þe schadwe of' eu*e*ry tree
Was as in lengþe þe same quantite
That' was þe body erect þat' caused it'
And þerfore by þe schadewe he took' his wit'
That' Phebus which þat' schon so cler and bright'
Degrees was xlv clombe on hight'
And for þat' day as in þat' latitude
It' was ten atte clokke he gan conclude
And sodeinly he plight' his hors aboute
lordynges q*uo*d he I warne 3ou alle þis route
The ferþe party of' þis day is gon
Now for þe loue of' god and of' seint' Iohn
leseþ no tyme as ferforth as ye may
Lordinges þe time it' waste þ night' and day
And steleþ from vs what priuely slepyng'
And what' þurgh necligence in oure waking'
As doth þe streem þat' turneþ neuer agayn
Descendyng' from þe mountayn in to playn
Wel can senek' and many a Philosophre
Biweilen tyme more þan gold in cophre
ffor los of' catelle may recouered be
But' los of' tyme schendeþ vs quod he

It' wil nought' come agayn wiþouten drede
Namore þan wile Malkyns maydenhede'
Whan sche haþ lost' it / in hir wantonnesse
lat' vs nought' mowlen þus in ydelnesse
Sire Man of' lawe quod he saue ȝe·blis
Tel vs a tale anon' as forward is
ye be submitted þurgh̄ your free assent'
To stonde in þis cas of' my Iuggement'
Aquiteþ ȝow now of' ȝoure beheste
Thanne haue ȝe doon your deuer atte leste
Oost' quod he depardeux ich assente
To breke forward is nought' myn entente [leaf 74, back]
Biheste is dette and I wil holde fayn
Al my biheste I can no bettre sain
ffor swich lawe as a man yeueþ anoþer wight'
he schulde himself' vsèn it' by right'
Thus wile oure text' but naþeles certein
I can right' now no þrifty tale sein
That' Chaucer þough he can but' lewedly
On metris and in rymyng' craftily
haþ sayd hem in such englissh̄ as he can
Of' olde tyme as knoweþ many a man
And if' he haue nought' seyd hem leeue broþer
In o book' / he haþ seyd hem in anoþer
ffor he haþ told of' louers vp and doñ
Mo þan Ovide made mencioñ
In his Epistles þat' been ful olde
What' scholde I tellen hem sen þei ben tolde
In youþe he made of' Ceys and alcione
And sipþen haþ he spoke of' euerychone
Thise noble wyfes and þese louers eeke
Who so þat' wile his large volom' seeke
Cleped þe seintes legende of' Cupide
Ther may he seen þe large woundes wyde
Of' lucresse & of' Babilan Tisbe
The swerd of' Dido for þe fals Ene

The tree of' Phillis for hire Demephon)
The pleynt' of' Dyanyre and of' Ermion
Of' Adriane and of' ysyphile
The barayne ysle stondyng' in þe see
The dreynt' leander for his Erro
The teeres of' helyne and eek' þe woo
Of' Brixseyde and of' þe ladomya
þe cruelte of' queen medea
The litel children hangyng' by þe hals
ffor þe Iason þat' was of' loue so fals
Of' ypmistra Penolope Alceste
youre wifhode he comendeth wiþ þe beste [leaf 75]
But' certeinly no word ne writeþ he
Of' þikke wicke ensample of Canace
That' loued hir owne brother synfully
Of' suche cursed stories I sei fy
Or elles of' Tyro Appoloneus
how þat' þe cursed king' Antiochus
Biraft' his doughter of' hir maydenhede
That' is so horrible a tale for to rede
Whan he hir þrew þorugh þe pament'
And þerfore he of' ful auisement'
Nolde neuer write in none of' his sermons
Of' which vnkynde abhominacioñs
Ne I ne wil not' reherce if' þat' I may
But' of' my tale how schal I don þis day
Me were loþ be likned douteles
To muses þat' men clepen pieriedes
Methamorphoseos wot' what' I mene
But naþeles I recche nought' a bene
Though I come after him with hawe bake
I speke in prose and lat' him Rimes make
And with þat' word he with a sobre chere
Bigan his tale as ȝe schal after heere.

[*PROLOGUE OF THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE.*]

[*There are no breaks in the MS between stanzas or Parts.*]

¶ Incipit ffabula.

O Hateful harm condicion of pouert
With thurst with cold with hunger he confoundeth
To asken helpe þe schameþ in þin hert
If þou now axe wiþ neede art þou so wounded
That verray neede vnwrappeth al þi wounde hid
Maugre þin heed þou most for Indigence
Or stele or begge or borwe þi dispence

Thou blamest crist and seist ful bitterly
he mys departeþ richesse temporal
Thy neyghebour þou witest synfully
And seist þou hast to litel and he haþ al
Par fey seistow somtyme he rekene schal
Whan þat his tail schal brennen in þe gleede
ffor he nought helpeþ needeful in here neede [leaf 75, back]

¶ Herkne what is þe menyng of þe wise
Bet is to deyen þan haue Indigence
Thi self neighebore wile þe dispise
If þou be pouer far wel þi reuerence
yet of þe wise man tak þis sentence
Alle þe dayes of pore men ben wikke
Be war þerfore or þou come in þat prikke

¶ If þou be pouere þi broþer hateþ þe
And alle þi freendes fleen fro þe allas
O Riche marchantz ful of wele be
O noble prudent folk as in þis cas
youre bagges ben nought filled with ambes âas
But with Sis Cynk þat renneþ for 3our chañce
At Cristes masse merye may 3e daunce

¶ ye seeken lond and see for ȝour' wynnynges
As wys folk' þat' knowen alle thestat'
Of' regnes ȝe ben fadres of' tyþinges
And tales bothen of' pees and of' debat'
I were right' now of' tales desolat'
Nere þat' a marchant' gon is many a yere
Me taught' a tale which as ye schal heere

[*As there is no room in this print for the Latin notes in the margin of the MS, they are put here, with the numbers of the lines to which they refer.*]

l. 161. Europia *est tercia pars* mundi. [MS, leaf 76.]

l. 198. ¶ Cep*tra* pharonei fr*atrum* discordia Thebe fl*amma* pnetontis deucalionis aque *in* stellis *priami* spec*ies* audacia turni sens*us* vlixeu herculeus *que* vigor. [MS, leaf 76, back.]

l. 294. ¶ Vnde P[t]holome*us* li*bro* j°, *Capitulo* g° *primi* motus celi duo su*nt* quor*um* vn*us* est qui mouet totu*m* *semper* ab oriente in occidente*m* vno modo super orbes & *cetera*. *Item* al*iter* *vero* motus est qui mouet orbe*m* stellar*um* currencium. Cont*ra* motum *primum* videli*cet* ab occidente *in* orientem super alios duos polos & *cetera*. Omnes enim concordati su*nt* q*uod* electiones sint debiles nisi in diuitib*us*, h*abent* enim isti li*cet* debilitentur eor*um* electiones radicem .i. natiuitates eor*um* que confortat *omnem* planeta*m* debile*m* in itinere. h*uc*. p*hilosophus*. [MS, leaf 78.]

l. 421. ¶ Semp*er* mundane leticie tristicia repentina succedit. Mundana *ergo* felicitas multis amaritudinib*us* est resp*ersa*. Extrema gaudij luctus occupat audi *ergo* salubre co*n*silium in die bonor*um* ne i*m*memor sis malor*um*. [MS, leaf 79, back.]

l. 771. ¶ Quid turpius ebrioso cui fetor in ore tremor *in* corpore qui *pro*mit stulta pro*dit* occulta cui mens alienatur facies *trans*format*ur* nullu*m* enim latet secretu*m* vbi reg*nat* ebrietas. [MS, leaf 84, back.]

l. 925. ¶ O extrema libidinis turpitudo que non solu*m* mente*m* effeminat sed ecia*m* corpus eneruat *semper* sequntur dolor & penitencia *post* & *cetera*. [MS, leaf 86, back.]

l. 1126. ¶ A mane vsq*ue* ad vesp*eram* mutabitur tempus tenent tympanu*m* & gaudent ad sonu*m* organi. [MS, leaf 89, back.]

l. 1135. *Quis* vnq*uam* vnic*am* diem totam duxit in sua delectacione iocundam que*m* *in* aliq*ua* p*arte* diei reatus conscien*cie* vel impetus ire vel motus concupiscencie inde no*n* turbauerit que*m* liuor inuidie vel ardor auaricie vel tumor sup*er*bie no*n* vexauerit vel q*uem* aliqua iactura vel offensa vel passio no*n* co*m*mouerit. [MS, leaf 89, back.]

[*PART I.*]

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ In Surrye whilom dwelt' a companye
Of' Chapmen riche and þer-to sad and trewe
That' wyde where sente here spicerie
Cloþes of' gold and Satyn riche of' hewe
here chaffare was so thrifty and so newe
That' eu*er*y wight' haþ deynte to chaffare
With hem and eek' to sellen hem here ware

¶ Now fil it' þat' þe maistres of' þat' sort'
han schapen hem to Rome for to wende
Were it' fo chapmanhode or for disport'
Non oþer message wolde þey þider sende
But comen hemself' to Rome þis is þe ende
And in swich place as þought' hem auantage
ffor here entente þei take here herbergage

Soiorned han þise marchantez in þat' toun [leaf 76]
A certein tyme as felle to hire plesance
But' so felle þat' þe excellent renoun
Of' þe Emp*er*our doughter dame Custance
Reported was with euery circumstance
vnto þise Surrien marchantz in swich wise
ffro day to day as I schal you deuyse/

¶ This was þe co*mon*e voys of' euery man
Oure emp*er*our of' Rome god him see
A doughter he haþ þat' syn þe world bigan
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beaute
Nas neuer such anoþer as is sche
I pray to god in honour hir sustene
And wolde sche were of' alle Europe þe queene

¶ In hire is heigh beaute wiþoute pride [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
youþe wiþoute greenehod of folye
To alle hire werkes vertu is hire guyde
humblesse haþ slayn in hire al tyrannye
Sche is a merour of alle curtesye
hire herte is verray chambre of holynesse
hire hand ministre of fredam for almesse

¶ And al þis voys is soþ as god is trewe
But now to purpos lat vs turne again
Thise marchantz han doon fraught here schippes newe
And whan þay haue þis blisful mayde sain
hom to Surrey beþ þei went agayn
And don here needes as þey han don yore
And lyuen in wele I can seye yow nomore

Now fil it þat þis marchantz stoden in grace
Of him þat was þe Sowdon of Surrie
ffor whan þei came from eny strange place
he wolde of his benigne curtesie/
Make hem good chere and besily aspie
Tythynges of sundy Remes for to leere
The wondres þat þey mighte seen or heere

Amonges oþer þinges specially
Thise marchantz han him told of Dame Custance [leaf 76, back]
So gret noblesse in ernest ceriously
That þis Sowdan haþ caught so gret/ plesance
To han hire figure in his remembrance
And alle his lust and alle his besy cure
Was for to loue hire whil his lijf may dure

Parauenture in þilke large book
Which þat þei cleped þe heuen write was
Wiþ sterres whan þat he his birþe took
That he for loue schulde han his deþ allas

ffor in þe sterres clerer þan is þe glas
Is writen god wot / who so cowde it rede/
The deþ of' eu*ery* man wiþouten drede

¶ In sterres many a wynter þ*er* biforn
Was write þe deth of' Ector Achilles [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Of' Pompe Iulius or þei were born
The stryf' of' Thebes and of hercules/
Of' Sampson Turnus and of' Socrates
The deth/ but mennes wittes ben so dulle
That' no wight' can wel rede it' atte fulle

This Sowdoñ for his priuey counseil sente
And schortly of' þis mater for to pace
he haþ to hem declared his entente
And seide hem certein but' if' he mig̃t' haue grace
To haue Custance wiþinne a litel space
he nas but' ded and charged hem in hye
To schapen for his lyf' som remedye

¶ Diuerse men diu*erse* þinges seiden
The argumentes casten vp and doun
Many a sotil resoñ forþ þey leyden
They speken of' Magiq*ue* and abusioñ
But' fynally as in conclusioñ
They can not' seen in þat' non auantage
Ne in non oþer weye saf' mariage

¶ Than saugh þey þer in such difficulte
By way of' resoñ for to speke al playn
By cause þat' þer was such diu*ersite* [leaf 77]
Bitwen here boþe lawes þat' þei sayn
They trowe þat' no cristne p*rince* wolde fain
Wedde his child vnder oure lawes so sweete
That' vs was taught' by mahoñ oure p*rophete*

¶ And he answerde rapere þan I leese
Custance I wol be cristned douteles
I mot' ben hires I may non oþer cheese
I pray 3ow holdeþ 3our argumentz in pees
Saueþ my lif' and beþ nought Recheles
To geten hire þat' haþ my lif' in cure
ffor in this woo I may not' longe endure

¶ What' nedeþ grettere dilatacioñ
I seie by tretys and embassadrie/
And by þe popes mediacioñ
And alle þe chirche and alle þe chiualrie
That' in distruction of' mawmattrie
And in encres of' cristes lawe deere
They ben accorded so as 3e schal heere/

¶ how þat' þe Sowdan and his Baronage
And alle his lieges schold y-cristened be/
And he schal han Custance in mariage
And certein gold y not' what' quantite
And herto founden sufficeant' seurte
This same accord was sworn in either syde
Now faire Custance almighty god þe gyde

Now wolde sommen waiten as I gesse/
That' I schulde tellen al þe purueance
That' þe Emperour of' his noblesse
hath schapen for his doughter dame Custance
Wel may men knowe þat' so gret' ordinañce
May noman tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause

¶ Bisschoppes ben schapen wiþ hire for to wende
lordes ladies knightes of' renoun
And oþer folk' ynowe þis is þe ende
And notified is þurgh out' þe touñ [leaf 77, back]

That euery wigħt' wiþ gret' deuocioñ
Scholde preye crist' þat' he þis mariage
Resceyue in gree. and speede þis viage

¶ The day is come of' hir dep*ar*tyng'
I sey þe woful lady[1] fatal is come [1 so]
That' þer may be no leng*er* tarying'
But' forþward þey hem dressen alle & some
Custance þat' with sorw is al ou*er*come
ffful pale arist' and dresseþ hire to wende
ffor wel sche seeth þer is non oþer ende

Allas what' wonder is it' þough sche wepte
That' schal be sent' to strange nacioñ
ffro freendes þat' so tendrely hire kepte
And to be bounden vnder subiectioñ
Of' oon sche knoweth not' his condicioñ
housbondes ben alle goode and han ben yore
That' knowen wyfes I dar say ȝou namore

¶ ffader sche sayde þi wrecchede child Custaunce
Thy yonge doughter fostred vp so softe
And ye my mooder my souereigne plesañce
Ouer alle þing' out' taken crist' a lofte
Custance youre child hir recomandeþ ofte
vnto your grace for I schal to Surrie
Ne schal I neuer seen ȝou more with ye

Allas vnto þe Barbarie nacioñ
I moste anon siþþen it' is your wille
But' crist' þat starf' for oure Redempcioñ
So yeue me grace his hestes to fulfille
I wrecche wo*m*man no fors þough I spille
Wo*m*men are born to thraldom and penance
And to ben vnder mannes gouernance

¶ I trowe at' Troye whan Purrus brak' þe walle
Or ylion þat' brende Thebes þat' Citee
Not' Rome for the harme thurgh hanybal
That' Romayns haþ venquissed tymes þre
Nas herde such tendre weepyng' for pite [leaf 78]
As in þe Chambre for hire departyng'
But' forþ sche moot' wher so sche weepe or syng' [*Latin note*, p. 133.]

¶ O ferste moeuyng' cruel firmament'
Wiþ þy diuinal sweigh that' crowdest' ay
And hurlest' alle fro Est' to Occident'
That' naturelly wolde holde anoþer way
Thy crowdyng' sett' þe heuen in such array
Atte bygynnyng' of' þis fiers viage
That' cruel mars haþ slain þis mariage

¶ Infortunat' ascendent' tortuous
Of' which þe lord is helples falle allas
Out' of' his angle in to þe derkest' hous
O. mars .o. ataȝir as in þis cas
O fieble moone vnhappy been þy paas
Thou knettest' þe þer þou nart' nought' receyued
There þou were wel fro þens now art' þou weyued

¶ Imprudent' Emperour of' Rome allas
Was þer no Philosophre in al þi toun
Is no tyme bet' þan oþer in such caas
Of' viage is þer non electioñ
Namly to folk' of' heigh condicioñ
Nat' whan a roote is of' a burthe y-knowe
Allas ȝe ben to lewed or to slowe

¶ The schip is brought' þis woful faire mayde
Solempnely wiþ euery circumstance
Now Ihesu crist' be with ȝou alle sche sayde
Ther nys nomore but' far wel faire Custance

Sche peyneþ hire to make good contynance
And forþ I lete hire saile in þis manere
And torne I wille again to my matiere

The mooder of þe Sowdon welle of vices
Espied haþ hir sones pleyne entent
how he wol lete his olde Sacrifices
And right anon sche for hire counseil sent
And þei ben come to knowe what sche ment
And whan assembled was þis folk in feere [leaf 78, back]
Sche sette hire doun and seide as ye schal heere

¶ lordes quoþ sche ȝe knowen euerych on
how þat my sone in poynt is for to lete
The holy lawes of oure alkaron
yeuen by goddes messager Makomete
But oon avow to grete god I hete
The lyf schal rather out of my body sterte
Or makometis lawe out of myn herte

What schoIde vs tyden of þis newe lawe
But þraldam to oure bodyes and penance
And afterward in helle to ben drawe
for we reneyed mahoñ oure creance
But lordes wol ye maken assurance
As I schal sein assentyng to my lore
And I schal make vs sauf for euermore

¶ They sworen and assenten euery man
To lyue with hire and dye and by hire stonde
And euerich in þe beste wise he can
To strengþen hire schal alle his frendes fonde
And sche haþ þis emprise take on honde
Which ȝe schal here þat I schal deuyse
And to hem alle sche spak in þis wise

¶ We schulle ferst' feyne vs cristendom to take/
Cold water schal not' greue vs but' a lite
And I schal swich a reuel and feste maken
That' as I trowe I schal þe soudon quite
ffor þough his wijf' be cristened neuer so white
Sche schal haue ⁊eede to waissche a-way þe reede
Though sche a ffonte ful of' water wiþ hire leede/

¶ O soudanesse roote of' Iniquite
Virago þou Semyram þe secounde
O. serpent' vnder femeninete
lik' to þe serpent' deepe in helle y-bounde
O feyned wo*m*man al þat' may confounde
Vertu and Innocence þorgh þy malice
Is bredd in þe as nest' of eu*e*ry vice [leaf 79]

¶ O Sathan envious syn þilke day
That' þou were chased fro oure heritage
Wel knewestow to wo*m*men þe olde way
Thow madest' Eua to bringen in seruage
Thow wilt' fordon cristene mariage
Thin Instrument' so weylowey þe while
Makest' þou of' wo*m*men whan þou wilt' begile

¶ This Sowdanesse whom I þus blame and warie
leet' priuely hire counseil gon here way
What' schulde I in þis tale lenger tarye
Sche rideth to þe Sowdan on a day
And seide him þat' sche wolde reneye hir lay
And cristendom of' prestes handes fonge
Repentynge sche he⁊ene was so longe

¶ Besekyng' him to doon hire þat' honour
That' sche most' han þe cristne folk' to feste
To plesen hem I wol do my labour
The Sowdan seith I wil don at' your heste

And knelyng' þanketh hire of' þat' requeste
So glad he was he nyste what' to seye
Sche kiste hir sone and hom sche goþ hir weye

[*PART II.*]

¶ Arryued been þise cristene folk' to londe
In Surrie with a gret' solempne route
And hastiliche þis sowdan sent' his sonde
ffirst' to his mooder and alle þe regne aboute
And saide his wijf' was come out' of' doute
And preyde hir for to ryde agein þe queene
The honour of' his regne to susteene

¶ Gret' was þe prees and riche was þarray
Of' Surriens and Ramains met' y feere
The mooder of' þe Soudan riche and gay
Receyued hire with also glad a cheere
As any mooder might' hir doughter deere
And to þe nexte Citee þer bisyde
A softe paas solempnely þei ryde

¶ Naught' trowe I þe tryumphe of' Iulius [leaf 79, back]
Of' which þat' lukan makeþ such a bost'
Was riallere ne more curious
Than was thassemble of' þis blisful oost'
But' þis scorpioñ this wikkede goost'
The Sowdanesse for alle hir flateringe
Caste vnder þis fúl mortally to stynge

¶ The Sowdan comeþ himself' sone after þis
So really that' wonder is to telle
he welcomeþ hire with alle ioye and blis
And þus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem dwelle

The fruyt' of þis matiere þat' I telle
Whan tyme come men þought' it for þe best'
That' Reuel stynte and men gon to here Rest'

¶ The tyme com þis olde Sowdanesse
Ordeyned haþ þis feeste of' which I tolde
And to þe feste cristene folk' hem dresse
In general boþe ȝonge and olde
here may men feste and rialte biholde
And deyntees mo þan I can ȝou deuyse
But' all to deere þei bought' it' ar þey ryse

¶ O sodein woo þat' euer art' Successour [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
To worldly blysse spreynd is with̄ bitternesse
The ende of' þe ioye of' oure worldly laboure
Wo occupieth þe fyn of' oure gladnesse
herk' þis counseille for þi sikernesse
vpon þi glade day haue in thy mynde
The vnwar wo or harm þat' comth behynde

ffor schortly for to tellen at' oo word
The Sowdan and þe cristene euerychone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord
But' it' were oonly dame Custance allone
This olde Sowdanesse cursede crone
haþ with hire freendes doon þis cursede dede
ffor sche hir self' wolde alle þe contre lede

¶ Ne þer nas Surrian non þat' was conuerted
That' of' þe counseil of' þe Sowdan wot' [leaf 80]
That' he nas al to-hewe or he asterted
And circumstance han þei take anon foot' hoot'
And in a Schippe al steereles god woot
Thay han hire sette and bidden hire lerne sayle
Out' of' Surrie agaynward to ytaile

¶ A certein tresour þat' sche þider ladde
And soþ to sain vitaile gret' plente
They han hire yeuen and cloþes eek' sche hadde
And forþ sche saileþ in þe Salte see
O my Custance ful of' benignite
O emperoures yonge doughter deere
he þat' is lord ouer fortune be þy steere

¶ Sche blisseþ & with ful pitous vois
vnto þe croys of' crist' þus seyde sche
O cler o welful auter holy croys
Rede of' þi lambes blood ful of' pite
That' wisshe þe world fro þe olde iniquite
Me fro þe feend and fro his clawes keepe
That' day þat' I schal drenchen in þe deepe

¶ victorious tree proteccioñ of' trewe
That' oonly worþi were for to bere
The king' of' heuene with his woundes newe
The white lambe þat' hurt' was with a spere
ffleemer of' feendes out' of' him and here
On whych þi lymes feithfully entenden
Me keepe and yef' me might' my lijf' tamenden

¶ yeeres and dayes fleet' þis creature
Thurgh out' þe see of' grece vnto þe strayte
Of' Marrok' as it' was hire auenture
O many a sory meel now may sche bayte
After hire deþ fulofte may sche wayte
Or þat' þe wilde wawes wil hir dryue
vnto þe place þer sche schal arryue

¶ Men mighten [aske] whi sche nas nat' slayn
Eke atte feste who might' hir body saue
I answere to þat' demande agayn [leaf 80, back]
he saued daniel in þe horrible caue

Ther eu*er*y wigħt' saue he maister or knaue
Was wiþ þe leoñ frete or asterte
No wigħt' but' god þat' he bar in his herte 476

¶ God list' to schewe his wonderful myracle
In hire. for sche scholde seen his mighty werkes
Crist' which þat' is to eu*er*y harm triacle
By certein menes oft' as knowen clerkes 480
Doþ þing' for certein ende þat' ful derk' is
To mannes wit' þat' for oure ignorance
Ne konne nought' knowe his prudent' p*ur*ueance 483

¶ Now siþ sche was not' atte feste y-slawe
Who kept' hir fro þe drenching' in þe see
Who kepte Ionas in þe fisshes mawe
Til he was spouted vp at' Nyniue 487
Wel may men knowe it' was no wight' but' he
That' kepte pepul ebraik' from here drenchyng'
With drye feet' þurgħ out' þe see passyng' 490

¶ Who bad þe foure spiritz of' tempest'
That' power han boþe to annoyen lond and see
Boþe north and south and also west' and est'
Anoyeþ neyþer see ne lond ne tree 494
Soþly þe comandour of' þat was he
That' fro þe tempest' ay þis wo*m*man kepte
As wel whan sche wook' as whan sche slepte 497

¶ Wher might' þis wo*m*man mete and drynke haue
Three ȝeer and moore how lasteþ hire vitaille
Who fedde þe Egipcien marie in the Caue
Or in desert' no wight' but crist' sanz faille 501
v. þousand folk' it was a gret meruaille
With loues fyue and fisshes tuo to feede
God sent' his foysoñ at' hire grete neede - 504

¶ Sche driueþ forþ in to oure Occean
þurghout' oure wilde see til atte last'
vnder an hold þat' nempnen I ne can
ffor in Northumburland þe wawe hir cast' [leaf 81]
And in þe sond hir schippe stiked so fast'
That' þennes wold it' nought' of' alle a tyde
The wille of' crist' was þat' sche scholde abyde 511

¶ The Constable of' þe castelle doun is fare
To seen þis wrak' and alle þe schippe he sought'
And fond þis wery womman ful of' care
he fond also þe tresow þat' sche brought' 515
In hire langage mercy sche bisought'
The lyf' out' of' hir body for to twynne
hire to deliuere of' wo þat' sche was Inne 518

¶ A maner latyn corupt' was hire speche
But' algates þer by was sche vnderstonde
The constable whan him list' no lengere seche
This woful womman brought' he to þe londe 522
Sche kneeleth doun and þankeþ goddes sonde
But' what' sche was sche wolde no man seye
ffor foul ne fair þough þat' sche scholde deye 525

¶ Sche seyde sche was so mased in þe see/
That' sche foryat' hire mynde by hire trouþe
The constable of' hire haþ so gret' pite
And eek' his wyf' þat' þei weepen for rouþe 529
Sche was so diligent' wiþouten slouþe
To serue and plese euerich in þat' place
That' alle hire louen þat' loken on hire face 532

¶ The constable and dame hermengheld his wif'
Were payens and þat' contray euery where
But' hermyngeld loued hir right' as hire lijf'
And Custance haþ so longe soiorned þere 536

In orisons wiþ many a bitter teere
Til Ihesu haþ conuerted þurgh his grace
Dame hermyngeld constablesse of þilke place

¶ In alle þat land durste no cristene route
Alle cristene folk ben fled from þat contre
Thurgh payens þat conquereden heer aboute
The plages of þe north by land & see
To wales fledde þe cristianite/ [leaf 81, back]
Of olde britons dwellyng in þis Isle/
There was hire refut / for þe meene while

¶ But yit nas neuer cristene britons so exiled
That þer nas somme in here priuyte
honourede crist/ and hethen folk bygiled
And neygh þe castelle swich þer dwelden þre
That oon of hem was blynd and might not se
But it were wiþ þilk eyen of his mynde
With whiche men seen after þat þai ben blynde

¶ Bright was þe sonne as in þat Somereś day
ffor which þe Constable and his wyf also
And Custance han y-take þe righte way
Toward þe see a forlong weye or two
To pleyen and to Romen to and fro
And in here walk þre blynde men þey mette
Crokede and olde with fast eyen y-schette

¶ In the name of crist criede þis blynde breton
dame hermyngild yeue me sight agayn
This lady wax affrayed of þe soun
lyst þat hir housbond schortly for to sein
Wolde hire for ihesu cristes loue haue slain
Til Custance made hire bold and made hire werche
The wille of crist as doughter of his cherch

¶ The Constable wax abaisshed of' þat sight'
And sayde what' amounteþ al þis fare
Custance answerde sire it' is cristes might'
That' helpeþ folk' out' of' þe feendes snare
And so ferforth sche gan oure lay declare
That' sche þe Constable or þat' it' was eue
Conuerteþ and on cryst' made him bileeue

¶ This Constable was noþing' lord of' þis place
Of' which I speke þere he Custance fond
But' kepte it' strongly many a wynter space
vnder .alla. kyng' of' all Northumberlond
þat' was ful wys and worþy of' his hond
Agayn þe Scottes as men may wel heere [leaf 82]
But' torne I wil again to my mateere /

¶ Sathan þat' euer vs wayteth to begile
Saugh of' Custance al hire perfectiō
And cast' anon how he might' quite her while
And made a yong' knigħt' þat' dwelte in þe toun
loue hire so hoot' of' fowl affectiō
That' verraily him þought' he schulde spill
But' he of' hire might' ones haue his wille

¶ he woweth hire but it' auaileþ nought'
Sche wolde do no synne by no weye
And for dispit' he compassed in his þought'
To make hir on schameful deþ to deye
he wayteþ whan þe Constable was aweye
And priuyly vpon a night' he crept'
In hermyngildes chambre whil sche slept'

¶ Wery for-waked in his orisons
Slepeth Custance and hermenghild also
This knight' þurgħ Sathanas temptacioūs
Al softely is to þe bedde I-go

And kutte þe þrote of hermengild a tuo
And leyde þe blody knyf by dame Custance
And wente his wey þer god yeue him meschance

¶ Sone after comth þis constable hom a gayn
And eek Alla þat king was of þat lond
And saugh his wyf dispiteusliche slain
ffor which ful ofte he wepte and wrong his hond
And in þe bed þe bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance allas what might sche seye
ffo verray woo hir witte was alle aweye

¶ To king Alla was told al þis meschance
And eek þe tyme and wher and in what wise
That in a schip was founde þis Custance
As heer biforn ȝe han herd eer deuise
The kinges herte of pite gan agrise
Whan he seih so benigne a creature
ffalle in disese and in mysauenture [leaf 82, back]

¶ ffor as þe lomb toward his deth is brought
So stant þis Innocent bifore þe king
This false knight þat haþ þis trayson wrought
Bereþ hire an hand þat sche haþ do þis þing
But naþeles þer was gret mornyng
Among þe poeple and seye þay can not gesse
That sche hadde don so gret a wickednesse

¶ ffor þey han sein hir euer so vertuous
And louyng hermynghild right as hire lif
Of þis bar witnesse euerich in þat hous
Sauf he þat hermegild slough wiþ his knif
This gentil king haþ caught a gret motyf
Of þis witnesse and þought he wolde enquere
Deppere in þis cas a trouthe for to lere

¶ Allas Custance þou nast' no champioñ
Ne fighte canst' þou nought' so weyloway
But' he þat' for oure redempcioñ
And bond Sathan and lith yet' þer he lay
So be þy stronge champioñ þis day
ffor but' vpon þe miracle kithe
Wiþouten gilt' þou schalt' ben slayn as swithe

¶ Sche sitte hir doun on knees and þus sche sayde
Immortal god þat' sauedest' Susanne
ffro false blame and þou merciful mayde
Marie I mene doughter to seint' Anne
Biforn whos child aungelis synge Osanne
If' I be gilteles of' þis felonie
My socour be for elles schalt' I dye

¶ haue ye not' sein som tyme a pale face/
Among' a prees of' him þat' haþ be lad
Toward his deth wher as him get' no grace/
And swich a colour in his face haþ had
Men mighte knowe his face þat' was bystad
Amonges alle þe faces in þat' route
So stant' Custance and loketh hire aboute

¶ O queenes lyuynge in prosperite [leaf 83]
Duchesses and ȝe ladies euerichone
haue som routhe on hir aduersite
An emperoures doughter stant' allone
Sche haþ no wigħt' to whom to make hir moone
O blood real þat' stondest' in þis drede/
ffer been þi freendes at' þy grete neede

¶ This alla king' haþ such compassioñ
As gentil herte is fulfild of' pite
That' from his eyhen ran þe water doñ
Now hastilich do fecche a book' quod he

And if' þis knight' wol swere how þat sche
This wo*m*man slough̄ ȝit' wol we vs auyse /
Whom þat' we wolde þat' schal be oure Iustise

¶ A britoñ book' y-writen with eu*au*ngiles
Was fette and on þis book' he swor anon
Sche giltif' was in þe mene whiles
An hand him smot' vpon þe nekke bon
That' doun he felle at ones as a stoon
And boþe his eyen brust' out' of' his face/
In sight' of' eu*er*y body in þat' place

¶ A vois was herd in general audience
And seyde þou hast' disclandred gilteles
The doughter of' holy chirche in heigh *pr*esence
Thus hast' þou doon and ȝet' I moot' holde my pees
Of' þis merueyle agast' was alle þe prees
As m[a]zed folk' þei stooden eu*er*ychone
ffor drede of' wreche saue Custance allone

Gret' was þe drede and eek' þe repentance
Of' hem þat' hadden wrong suspecioñ
vpon þis seely Innocent' Custance
And for þis miracle in conclusioñ
And by Custance mediacioñ
The king' and many an*o*þ*er* in þat place
Conuerted was þanked be goddes *gra*ce

¶ This false knight' was slain for his vntrouthe
By Iuggement' of'. alla. hastily [leaf 83, back]
And yet' Custance haþ of' his deth̄ gret' rouþe
And after þis ih*esus*[1] of' his mercy [[1] MS ih̄c]
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden þat' is so bright' and scheene
And þus haþ Crist' made Custance a queene

¶ But' who was woful if' I schul nat' lye
Of' þis wedding' but' Donegilde and nomo
The kinges mooder ful of' tyrannye
hir þought' hir cursed herte barst/ a two
Sche wolde nought' hir sone hadde don so
hir þought' a despit' þat' he schulde take
So strange a creature vnto his make

¶ Me list' nou3t' of' þe chaf' ne of' þe stre
Make so long' a tale as of' þe corn
What' schulde I tellen of' þe realte
Of' mariage or which cours goþ biforn
Who bloweþ in a trompe or in an horn
The fruyt' of eu*e*ry tale is for to seie/
Thei ete and drynke and daunce and synge and pleye

They gon to bedde as it was skile and right'
ffor þough þat' wyfes ben ful holy þinges
They moste take a pacience a night'
Such manere necessaries as ben plesynges
To folk' þat' han y-wedded hem wiþ rynges
And leye a litel here holynesse asyde
As for þe time it' may non oþer betyde

¶ On hire he gat' a knaue child anon
And to a bisshop*e* and his counseil eeke
he took' his wijf' to kepe whan he is goon
To Scotland ward his fomen for to seeke
Now faire Custance þat' is so humble and meeke
So longe is gon wiþ childe til þat' stille
Sche halt' hir chambre abydyng' at' cristes wille

¶ The tyme is come a knaue child sche beer
Mauricius atte font' ston þei him *calle*
This Constable doþ forþ come a messagere [leaf 84]
And wrot' to his king' þat' cleped was alle.

how þat' þis blisful tyding' is bifalle
And oþer tydynges spedful for to seye
he takeþ þe lettre and forth he goþ his weye

¶ This messager to don his auantage/
vnto þe kinges moder rideþ swiþe
And saluet[h]*hire ful faire in his langage
Ma dame quoþ he ȝe may be glad and bliþe
And thanke god an hundred þousand siþe
My lady queen haþ child wiþouten doute
To Ioye and blisse of' alle þis regne aboute

¶ Io here þe lettres seled of' þis þing'
That' I mot' bere with al þe haste I may
If' ye wole aught' vnto your sone þe king'
I am your seruañt boþe night' and day
Dongyld answerd as now at' þis tyme nay
But' heer al night' I wole þou take þi rest'
Tomorwe wil I seie what' me lest'

¶ This messager drank' sadly ale and wyn
And stolen weren his lettres priuyly
Out' of' his box whil he sleep as a swyn
And counterfeted was ful subtilly
Anoþer lettre wrought' ful synfully
vnto þe king' direct' of' þis matiere
ffro his Conestable as ȝe schal after heere

The lettre spak' þe queen deliuered was
Of' so horrible a feendlich creature
That' in þe Castelle non so hardy was
That' ony while dorste þerinne endure
The mooder was an elf' by auenture
ycome by charmes or by sorcerie
And euery wight' hateþ hire companye

Wo was þis king' whan he þis l*ett*re hadde seyn
But' to no wigħt' he tolde his sorwes sore
But' of' his oughne hond he wrot ageyn
Welcome þe sonde of' crist' for eu*er*emore [leaf 84, back]
To me þat' am now lerned in his lore
lord welcome be þi lust' and þi plesance
My lust' is put' al in þin ordinance 763

¶ kepeth þis child al be it' foul or fair*e*
And eek' my wif' vnto myn hom comyng'
Crist' whan him list' may sende me an hair*e*
More agreable þan þis is to my liking' 767
This lettre he seleþ priuyly wepyng'
Which to þe messager was take sone
And forth he goþ þer is nomore to doone 770

¶ O messager fulfild of' dronkenesse / [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Strong' is þi breþ þi lymes faltren ay
And þou biwreyest' all*e* sikernesse /
Thy mynde is lorn þou iangelest' as a Iay 774
Thy face is torned in a newe aray
Ther dronkenesse regneþ in ony route
Ther nys no counseil hid wiþouten doute 777

¶ O donegild I haue non englissħ digne
vnto þy malice and þy tyrannye
And þerfore to þe feend I þe resigne /
lat' him enditen of' þi traiterie / 781
ffy mannyssħ fy o nay by god I lye
ffy feendlich spirit' for I dar wel telle
Though þou here walke þy spirit' is in helle / 784

¶ This messager comþ fro þe king' agayn
And at' þe kinges moodres court' he ligħt'
And sche was of' þis messager ful fain
And plesed him in al þat' euer sche migħt' 788

he drank' and wel his gerdel vnderpight'
he sleepeþ and he snorteþ[1] in his gyse [[1] MS fn ...]
Al night' til þe sonne gan arise 791

¶ Eft' were his lettres stolen euerich on
And countrefeted *lettres* in þis wise
The king' comandeþ his constable anon
vp peyne of' hangyng' on a heih Iuyse 795
That' he ne schulde suffre in no wise/ [leaf 85]
Custance in with his Regne for tabide
Thre dayes and a quarter of' a tyde 798

¶ But' in þe same schip as he hire fond
hire and hire ȝonge sone and alle hir gere
he schulde putte and croude fro þe londe
And charge hire þat' sche neuer eft' come þere 802
O my Custance wel may þi goost' haue feere/
And sleping' in þi drem ben in penaunce/
Whan Donegild caste al þis ordinance 805

¶ This messager on morwe whan he wook'
Vnto þe castel halt' þe nexte way
And to þe Constable he þe *lettre* took'
And whan þat' he þis pitous *lettre* say 809
fful ofte he seyde allas and weylaway
¶ lord crist' *quod* he how may þis lettre endure
So ful of' synne is many a creature 812

¶ O mighty god if' þat' it' be þi wille
Sith þou art' rightful Iuge how may it' be
That' þou wolt' suffren Innocentz to spille
And wikke folk' regnen in prosperite 816
¶ O goode Custance allas so wo is me
That' I moot' be þi tormentour or deye
On schames deþ þer is non oþer weye 819

¶ Wepen boþe ȝonge and olde in al þat' place
Whan þat' þe king' þis cursede lettre sente
And Custance with a dedly pale face
The ferþe day toward hir schip sche wente
But' naþeles sche takeþ in good entente
The wille of' crist' and knelyng' in þe stronde
Sche seyde lord ay welcome be þi sonde

he þat' me kepte fro þe false blame
Whil I was on þe lond amonges yow /
he kan me kepe from harm) and eek' fro schame
In salte see al þough I se not' how
As strong' as euer he was he is right' now /
In him trust' I and in his mooder deere [leaf 85, back]
That' is to me my sail and eek' my steere

hir litel child lay weepyng' in hire arm)
And knelyng' pitously to him sche seide
Pees litel sone I wol do þe non harm
Wiþ þat' hir couerchef' of' hir heed sche breyde
And ouer his litel eyȝen sche it leyde/
And in hir arm sche lulleth it ful faste /
And in to heuen) hir yhen vp sche caste

¶ Moder quod sche and mayde bright' marie
Soth is þat' þurgh wommannes eggement
Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to deye
ffor which þi child was on a croys y-rent'
Thy blisful eighen saugh al his torment'
Than is þer no comparison) bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene

¶ Thou saugh þi sone y-slayn biforn þin eyen.
And ȝit' now lyueþ my litel child par fay
Now lady bright' to whom alle woful cryen)
Thow glorie of' wommanhod þou faire may

Thou hauen of refut brighte sterre of day
Rewe on my child þat of þi gentilesse
Rewest on euery rewful in distresse

¶ O litel child allas what is þi gilt
That neuer wroughtest synne as 3it *par* de
Why wil þin harde fader haue þe spilt
O mercy deere Conestable *quod* sche
As lat my litel child dwelle heer with þe
And if þou darst nought sauen him for blame
So kisse him ones in his fadres name

¶ Ther with sche lokeþ bakward to þe lond
And sayde farewel housbonde routheles
And vp sche rist and walketh doun þe stronde
Toward þe schip hir folweþ alle þe prees
And euer sche preieþ hir child to holde his pees
And takeþ hire leeue and with an holy entent
Sche blisseþ hire and in to schip sche wente [leaf 86]

vitailled was þe schip it is no drede
habundauntly for hire ful longe space
And oþer necessaries þat scholden neede
Sche hadde ynough heried be goddes *grace*
ffor wynd and weder almighty god purchace
And brynge hir home I can no better sey
But in þe see sche dryueþ forþ hir wey

[*PART III.*]

Alla þe king comþ hom sone after þis /
vnto his castelle of þe which I tolde
And axeþ wher his wyf and his child is
The Constable gan aboute his herte colde

And pleynly al þe maner he him tolde
As ye han herd I can telle it' no bettre
And scheweth þe king' his seal and his lettre

And seyde lord as ȝe comaunded me
vp peyne of' deth so haue I don certein
This messager tormented was til he
Moste biknowen and tellen plat' and plein
ffrom night' to night' in what' place he hadde leyn
And þus by witt' and subtil enqueryng'
ymagined was by whom þis harm gan spring'

¶ The hond was knowe þat' þe *lettre* wrot'
And alle þe venym of' þe cursed dede
But' in what' wise certeinly I not'
The effect' is þis þat' alla out' of' drede
his mooder slough þat' many men pleynly reede
ffor þat' sche traitour was to hire ligeance /
Thus endeþ olde Donegild wiþ meschance

The sorwe þat' þis Alla night' and day
Makeþ for his wyf' and for his *child*
Ther is no tonge þat' it' *telle may*
But' now wol I vnto Custance *go*
That' fleeteþ in þe *see* in peyne and *wo*
.v. yeer and more as *likede cristes sonde*
Ar þat' hire schip approched vnto *londe*

¶ Vnder an heþen castelle atte laste [leaf 86, back]
Of' which þe name in my text' nouȝt' I fynde
Custance and eek' hir childe þe see vp caste
Almighty god þat' saueþ al mankynde
haue on Custance and hir child som mynde
That' fallen is in hethene hond eft' sone
In poynt' to spille as I schal telle yow soone

Doun fro þe Castelle comþ þer many a wight'
To gawren on þis schip and on Custance
But' schortly fro þe castel on a night'
The lordes styward god yeue him meschance
A theef' þat' hadde renyed oure creance /
Com in to schip allone and seide he scholde
hir lemman be wher so sche wolde or nolde/

¶ Wo was þis wrecchede womman þo bigon
hir child cryede and sche cried pitously
But' blisful marie halp hir right' anoon
ffor with hir strogelyn wel and mightily
The theef' fel ouer bord al sodeinly
And in þe see he dreynte for vengance
And þus haþ crist / vnwemmed kept' Custance

O foule lust' of' luxurie lo þin ende [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Nought' / oonly þat' þou fayntest' mannes mynde
But' verreyly þou wolt' his body schende
The ende of' þi werk' or of' þi lustes blynde
Is compleynyng' how many oon may men fynde
That' nought' for werk' somtyme but' for þentent'
To don þis synne ben eyþer slayn or schent'

¶ how may þis weyke womman han þe strengþe
hire to defende ageyn þis renegat'
O. gelyas vnmesurable of' lengþe
how mighte Dauid make þe so mat'
So yonge and of' armure so desolat'
how dorst' he loke vpon þi dredful face
Wel may men sen it' was but' goddes *grace*

Who yaf' Iudith corage or hardynesse
To slen him Olefernus in his tent' [leaf 87]
And to delyueren out' of' wrecchednesse
The poeple of' god. I sey for þis entent'

þat' right' as god spirit' and vigor sent'
To hem and saued hem out' of meschance
So sent' he mig̃t' and vigor to Custance

fforþ goþ hir schip forþ on þe narwe mouth
Of' Iubaltar and Septe dryuyng' ay
Somtyme west' and som tyme north and south̃
And som tyme est' ful many a wery day
Til cristes mooder blissed be sche ay
haþ schapen þurgh̃ hir endeles goodnesse
To make an ende of' alle hir heuynesse

¶ Now lat' vs stynte of' Custance but a þrowe
And speke we of' þe Romeyn Emperour
That' out' of' Surrie haþ þe lettres knowe
The slaughtere of' cristene folk' and deshonour
Don to his doughter by a fals traytour
I mene þe cursede wickede Sowdonesse
That' at' þe feste let' slen boþe more and lesse

¶ ffor which þis Emperour haþ sent' anon
his senatour wiþ real ordinance
And oþer lordes god wot' many on
On Surriens to taken his vengance
They brennen sleen and bringen hem to meschãnce
fful many a day but' schortly þis is þende
homward to Rome þei schapen hem to wende

This Senatour repaireth with victorie
To Romeward saylinge really
And mette þe schip dryuyng' as seiþ þe storie
In which Custance sitte ful pitously
No þing' ne knew he what' sche was ne why
Sche was in swich aray ne sche nyl seye
Of' hire astate þough̃ sche scholde deye

he bringeþ hire to Rome and to his wijf'
he yaf' hire and hire 3onge sone also
And wiþ þe Senatour sche ladde hir lyf' [leaf 87, back]
Thus kan oure lady bringen out of' woo 977
Woful Custance and many anoþer mo
And long' tyme dwelled sche in þat' place
In holy werkes euere as was hir grace 980

¶ The Senatoures wijf' hir aunte was
But' for al þat' sche knew hir neuer þe more
I wil no lenger tarien in þis caas
But' to king' Alla which I spak' of' yore 984
That' for his wyf wepeþ and sikeþ sore /
I wol retorne and lete I wil Custance
vnder þe Cenatoures gouernance / 987

¶ kyng' Alla which þat' hadde his moder slayn
vpon a day fil in such repentance
That' iſ I schortly tellen schal and playn
To Rome he comeþ to receyuen his penance 991
And put' him in þe popes ordinance
In heigh and low and Ihesu crist' besoughte
fforyeue his wikkede werkes þat' he wroughte 994

¶ The fame ano þurgh Rome toun is born
how Alla king' schal comen in pilgrinage
By herberiours þat' wenten him biforn
ffor which þe Senatour as was vsage 998
Rood him agayn and many of his lynage
As wel to schewen his hie magnificence
As to don any king' a reuerence 1001

¶ Gret' cheere doth þis noble Senatour
To king' Alla and he to him also
Euerich of' hem doþ oþer gret' honour
And so bifille þat' in a day or tuo 1005

This Senatour is to kingⁱ alla go
To feeste and schortly ifⁱ I schal notⁱ lye
Custance sone is in his companye / 1008

¶ Som men wolde seyn atte requeste ofⁱ Custance
This Senatour haþ lad þis child to feste
I may notⁱ tellen euerich circumstance /
Be as be may þer was he atte leste [leaf 88]
Butⁱ soþ is þis þatⁱ at his moodres heste
Byforn Alla duryngⁱ þe metes space
The child stood lokingⁱ in þe kinges face 1015

This alla kingⁱ haþ ofⁱ þe child gretⁱ wonder
And to þe Senatour he sayde anon
Whos is þatⁱ faire child þatⁱ stondeþ yonder
I notⁱ quod he by god and by seintⁱ Iohn 1019
A mooder he haþ butⁱ fader haþ he non
Thatⁱ I ofⁱ wootⁱ and schortly in a stounde /
he tolde alla how þat þis child was founde 1022

¶ But god wotⁱ quod þis Senatour also
So vertuous a lyuere in my lyfⁱ
Ne saugh I neuer as sche ne herde ofⁱ mo
Oſ worldly wommen mayde ne ofⁱ wijfⁱ 1026
I dar wel sayn sche hadde leuer a knyfⁱ
Thurghoutⁱ hire brestⁱ þan ben a womman wikke
Ther is noman kowde bringe hire to þatⁱ prikke 1029

Now was þis child as likⁱ vnto Custance /
As possible as is a creature to be
This alla haþ þe face in remembrance
Of dame Custance and þer on mused he 1033
Ifⁱ þatⁱ þe childes moder were aughtⁱ sche /
Thatⁱ is his wyfⁱ and priuily he sighte
And spedde him fro þe table þatⁱ he mighte 1036

¶ Par fay he þought' þe fantome is in myn hed
I oughte demen of' skilful Iuggement
That' in þe salte see my wyf' is deed
And aftirward he made his argument
What' wot' I if þat' crist' haþ hider sent'
My wyf' by see as wel as he hir sente
To my contre fro þennes þat' sche wente

¶ And after non hom with þe Senatour
Goþ alla for to seen þis wonder chaunce
This Senatour doþ alla gret' honour
And hastily he sente after Custance
But' trusteþ wel hire luste nought' to daunce [leaf 88, back]
Whan þat' sche wiste wherfore was þat' sonde
Vnneþe vppon hire feet' sche mighte stonde /

¶ Whan alla saugh his wyf' faire he hire grette /
And wepte þat' it was reuþe for to se
ffor atte ferste look' he on hire sette /
he knew wel verrely þat' it was sche /
and for sorwe as domb stant' as a tre
So was hir herte schet' in hire distresse
Whan sche remembred his vnkyndenesse /

¶ Twies sche swowneþ in his owne sight'
he wepte and him excuseth pitously
Now god quod he and his halwes brigħt'
So wisly on my saule as haue mercy
That' of' youre harm' as gilteles am I
As is Maurice my sone so lik' ȝoure face
Elles the feende me fecche out' of' þis place /

¶ longe was þe sobbyng' and þe bittre peyne /
Or þat' here wofulle hertes mighte cesse /
Gret' was þe pite for to heere hem pleyne /
þurgh whiche pleyntes gan hire wo encresse /

I pray 3ou alle my labour to relesse
I may not' tellen hir wo vntil to morwe
I am so wery for to speke of' hire sorwe 1071

¶ But finally whan þat' þe soþe is wist'
That' Alla gilteles was of' hire woo /
I trowe an hundred tymes ben þei kiste
And such a blisse is þer betwixe hem tuo 1075
That' saue þe ioye þat' lasteth eue*r*emo
Ther is non lik' þat' ony creature
haþ seyn or schal whil þe world may dure 1078

¶ Tho preyed sche hire housbonde mekely
In relief' of' hir longe pitous pyne
That' he wolde preye hire fader specially
That' of' his mageste he wolde enclyne 1082
To fouche sauf' som day with̄ him to dyne
Sche preyde him eek' he scholde by no weye [leaf 89]
vnto hir fader no word of' hire seye 1085

¶ Some men wolde sein how þat' þe child Maurice
Doþ þis message vntil þis Emp*er*our
But' as I gesse Alla was nought' so nyce
To him þat' was of' so souereigne honour 1089
As he þat is of' cristene folk' þe flour
Sent' eny child but it is bet' to deme
he went' himself' and so it may wel seme 1092

¶ This Emp*er*our hath graunted gentily
To come to dyner as he him bysought'
And wel redy he lokede bisily
vpon þis child and on his doughter þought' 1096
Alla goþ to his In and as him ought'
Arrayed for þis feste in euery wise
As ferforth as his konnyng' may suffise 1099

¶ The morwe com and alla gan him dresse
And eek' his wyf' þis Emperour to meete
And forþ þey ryde in ioye and in gladnesse /
And whan sche seigh hir fader in þe strete
Sche light' a doun and falleþ him to feet
ffader quod sche youre 3onge child Custance
Is now ful clene out' of' 3oure remembrance

¶ I am 3oure doughter Custance quod sche
That whilom ye sent vnto Surrye
I am I fader þat' in þe salte see
Was putte allone and dampned for to dye
Now goode fader mercy to you I crye
Send me nomore vnto non hethenesse
But' þonk' my lord heer of' his kyndenesse

¶ Who can þe pitous Ioye tellen al
Bitwexe hem þre syn þey ben þus y-mette
But' of' my tale make an ende I schal
The day goþ faste I wol no lenger lette
This glad folk' to dyner þey hem sette
In ioye and blisse at' mete I lete hem dwelle
A þousand fold wel more þan I can telle / [leaf 89, back]

This child maurice was sitthen Emperour
Made by þe pope and lyuede cristenely
To cristes chirche he dede gret honour
But' I letete[1] alle his story passen by [1 so] 1124
Of' Custance is my tale specially
In olde Romeyn gestes men may fynde [Latin note, p. 133.]
Maurices lyf' I bere it nought' in mynde 1127

¶ This king' Alla. whan he his tyme say
With his Custance his holy wif so sweete
To Engelond þei come þe redy way
Wher as þay lyue in ioye and in quiete 1131

But litel while it lasteþ I 3ou heete
Ioye of þis world for tyme wil nou3t abyde
ffro day to nyght it chaungeþ as þe tyde 1134

¶ Who lyued euere in such delyt a day [*Latin note*, p. 138.]
That ne meued eyþer conscience /
Or Ire or talent of som kyn affray
Enuye or pride or passiõ or offense / 1138
I ne say but for þis ende þis sentence
That litel while in Ioye or in plesance
lasteþ þe blisse of alla wiþ Custance / 1141

ffor deþ þat takeþ of heigh and lough his rent
Whan passed was a yeer euene as I gesse
Out of þis world þis king Alla he hent
ffor whom Custance haþ ful gret heuynesse / 1145
Now lat vs prayen god his soule blesse /
And dame Custance finally to seye
Toward þe toun of Rome goþ hire weye 1148

To Rome is come þis holy creature
And fyndeþ hire freendes hol and sounde
Now is sche scaped alle hire auenture
And whan sche hir fader haþ I-founde 1152
Doun on hir knees falleth sche to grounde
Wepynge for tendirnesse in herte bliþe
Sche herieþ god an C. þousand sithe 1155

In vertue and holy almesdede / [leaf 90]
They lyuen alle and neuer asonder wende
Til deth departe hem þis lif þey lede
And fareþ now wel my tale is at an ende 1159
Now ihesu crist þat of his might may sende
Ioye after wo gouerne vs in his *grace*
And kepe vs alle þat ben in þis place / Explicit 1162

Owre oost' vpon his stiropes stood anoon [*on leaf* 90]
And seyde goode men herkeneþ euerych on
This was a thrifty tale for þe nones
Sire parissche prest' q*uo*d he for goddes boones
Telle vs a tale as was þi forward yore
I se wel þat' ye lerned men in loore
Can moche good by goddes dignete
The p*ar*soñ him answerde benedicite
What' eyleþ þe man so synfully to swere /
Oure ost' answerde. O Ianekyn be ye þere
I smelle a lollere in þe wynd quod he
how goode men q*uo*d oure host' herkeneþ me
Abydeþ for goddes digne passioñ
ffor we schal han a predicacioñ
This lollere heer wil prechen vs som what'
Nay by my fader soule þat' schal he nat
Seyde þe Esquier heer schal he nat' preche
He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche
he leueþ all in þe grete god he
he wolde sowen som difficulte
Or springen Cokkel in oure clene corn
And þ*er*fore oost' I warne þe biforn
My Ioly body schal a tale telle
And I schal clynken 3ou so mery a belle
That' I schal waken al þis compaignie
But' it schal not' ben of' philosophie
Ne Phislyas ne termes queinte of' lawe
Ther is but' litel latyn in my nawe

[The Squire's Tale follows in the MS.]

DRAWINGS OF THE 23 TELLERS

OF THE

24 CANTERBURY TALES,

COPIED FROM THE ELLESMERE MS,

AND CUT ON WOOD,

Mr. W. H. Hooper.

In this first issue, 1871, *only* 14 *of the Cuts are given. The other* 10 *will follow in* 1872. *When the print of each MS is bound, the cut of each Teller of a Tale can be put at the beginning of his Tale, as in the Ellesmere MS, or by his description in the General Prologue, to contrast the artist's hand with the poet's; or, all the cuts can be put together before or after the Prologue, or at the end of the volume* (*as not part of the MS*), *according to the fancy of each Member.*

THE MILLERE.

Ellesmère MS, leaf 38, back.

THE KNYGHT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 14.

(The brand on the horse's hip—M, ? for *Miles*—
is in ink, and probably by a later hand.)

THE COOK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 51.

THE REVE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 46.

THE WYF OF BATHE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 76.

THE MAN OF LAWE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 54, *back.*

THE FIERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 80, *back.*

THE SOMONOUR.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 85, back.

THE CLERK OF OXENFORD.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 92.

THE SHIPMAN.

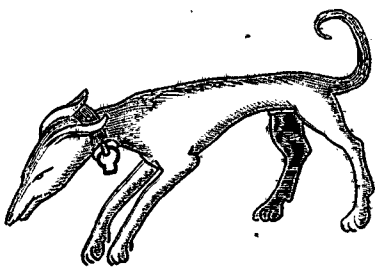
Ellesmere MS, leaf 147, *back.*

THE PRIORESSE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 162, back.

CHAUCER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 157, *back.*



THE MONK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 172.

THE NONNES PREEST.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 183.

Owre oost' vpon his stiropes stood anoon [*on leaf* 90]
And seyde goode men herkeneþ euerych on
This was a thrifty tale for þe nones
Sire parissche prest' quod he for goddes boones
Telle vs a tale as was þi forward yore
I se wel þat' ye lerned men in loore
Can moche good by goddes dignete
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He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche
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And þerfore oost' I warne þe biforn
My Ioly body schal a tale telle
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But' it schal not' ben of' philosophie
Ne Phislyas ne termes queinte of' lawe
Ther is but' litel latyn in my nawe

AT Sarray in þe land of Tartarye [leaf 90, back]
Ther dwelt a king þat werreyed Russye
Thurgh which þer deyed many a doughty man
This noble king was cleped kambynskan
Which in his tyme was of so gret renoñ
That þer nas nowher in no regioñ
So excellent a lord in alle þing
him lacked nought þat longed to a kyng
As of þe secte of which þat he was born
he kepte his lay to which þat he was sworn
And þerto he was hardy wys and riche
And pitous and Iust alwey y-liche
Soþ of his word benigne and honorable
Of his corage as eny centre stable centrum circuli
yong freissh and strong in armes desirous
As eny bacheler of alle his hous
A fair persone he was and fortunat
And kepte alway so wel real astat
That þer nas no wher swich anoþer man
This noble king this Tartre Kambynskan
hadde tuo sones in Eltheta his wyf
Of which þe eldest highte Algarsyf
That oþer was y-cleped Camballo
A doughter hadde þis worþy king also
That yongest was and highte Canace
But for to telle you al hire beaute
It lyþ nought in my tonge ne in my konnyng
I dar not vndertake so heigh a þing

Myn englissch eek' is insufficient
It' moste ben a Rethor excellent'
That' coupe his colours longyng' for þat art'
If' he schulde hir discryue in any part
I am non swich I moot' speke as I can
And so bifelle that' whan þis Cambyńskan
haþ twenty wynter born his Diadéme
As he was wont' fro yeer to yeer I deeme
he leet' þe feste of' his natiuite [leaf 91]
Don cryen þurgh Sarray his Cite
The laste Idus of' March after þe 3eer
Phebus þe sonne Iolif' was and cleer
ffor he was neigh his exaltacioñ
In martes face and his mansioñ
In aries þe Colerik' þe hote signe
fful lusty was þe weder and benigne
ffor which þe foules a3ein þe sonne sshene
What' for þe sesoñ and þe yonge grene
fful loude songe hire affections
hem semed han geten hem protections
A3ein þe swerd of' wynter keene and cold
This Kambyńskan of' which I haue 3ou told
In Real vestiment' sit' on his deys
With dyademe ful heigh in his paleys
And halt' his feste solempne and so riche
That' in þis world ne was þer non it' liche
Of' which if' I schal telle al þe array
Than wold it' occupye a someres day
And eek' it' needeþ nat' to deuyse
At euery cours þe ordre of' here seruise
I wol not' tellen of' here straunge sewes
Ne of' here swannes ne of' here heroñ-sewes
Ek' in þat' lond as tellen knightes olde
Ther is som mete þat' is ful deynte holde
That' in þis lond men recche but' smal
Ther nys no man þat' may reporten al

I wol not' tarien yow for it' is prime
And for it' is no fruyt' but' los of' tyme
vnto my first' purpos I wole haue my recours
And so bifelle þat' after þe þridde cours
Whil þat' þis king' sit' þus in his nobleye
herknyng' his menstreles here þinges pleye
Biforn him atte bord deliciously
In atte halle dore al sodeinly
Ther com a knight' vpon a steede of' bras [leaf 91, back]
And in his hond a brood Mirour of' glas
vpon his thombe he hadde of' gold a ryng'
And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng'
And vp he ryde þ to þe heihe bord
In alle þe halle ne was þer spoke a word
ffor merueille of' þis knight' him to biholde
fful bysyly þey wayten 3onge and olde /
This strange knight' þat' com þus sodeynly
Al armed saue his heed ful richely
Salued þe king' and queen and lordes alle
By ordre as þey seten in þe halle
with so heigh reuerence and obeissances
As wel in speche as in contenances
That' Gawayn with his olde curtesye
Though he com agayn out' of' fayrie ,
Ne coupe him nought' amende wiþ no word
And after þis bifore þe heihe bord
he with a manly vois sayde his message
After þe forme vsed in his langage
wiþoute vice of' Sillable or of' *lettre*
And for his tale scholde seme þe bettre
Acordant' to his wordes was his chere /
As techeþ art' of' speche hem þat' it' lere /
Al be it' þat' I can nat' sowne his stile
Ne can not' clymben ouer so heigh a style
yet/ seye I þis þat' as to *commune entente*
Thus moche amounteþ al þat' euer he mente

If it so be þat I haue it in my mynde
he seyde þe king of Arabie and of Inde
My liege lord on þis solempne day
Salueþ 3ou as he best can and may
And sendeþ yow in honour of your feste
By me þat am redy at al your heste /
This steede of Bras þat esily and wel
kan in þe space of a day naturel
This is to seie in .xxiiij^ti. houres [leaf 92]
Wher so yow list in droughte or in schoures
Beren youre body in to euery place /
To which youre herte wilneth for to pace
wiþoute wem of 3ou þorugh foul or fair
Or if 3ou list to flee as hye in þair
As doþ an Egle whan him list to sore
This same steede schal bere 3ou eueremore
wiþouten harm til ye be þer you leste
Though þat 3e slepen on his bak or reste
And torne a3ayn wiþ wryþing of a pyn
he þat it wroughte couþe ful many a gyn
he waitede many a constellacōn
Or he hadde do þis operaciōn
And knew ful many a seal and many a bond
This Mirour eek þat I haue in myn hond
haþ such a might that men may in it see
whan þer schal fallen any aduersite
Vnto youre regne or to your self also
And openly who is 3our frend or foo
And ouer al þis if ony lady bright
haþ set hire herte on any maner wight
If he be fals sche schal his trayson se
his newe loue and al his subtilite
So openly þat þer schal no þing hyde
wherfore ageyn þis lusty somer tyde
This mirour and þis ryng as ye may see /
he haþ sent to my lady Canacee

youre excellent' doughter þat' is heere
The vertu of' þis ring' if' ȝe wol heere
Is þis. þat' if' hir list' it' for to were /
vpon hir þombe or in hir purs it bere
Ther is no foule þat' fleigh vnder þe heuene
þat' she ne schal vnderstonde his steuene
And knowe his menyng' openly and pleyn
And answere him in his langage ageyn
And euery gras þat' groweþ vpon a roote / [leaf 92, back]
Sche schal wel knowe and whom it wol do boote
Al be his woundes neuer so deepe and wyde
This naked swerd þat' hongeth by my syde
Swich vertu haþ þat' what' man so ye smyte
Thurghout' his armour it wole kerue and byte
Were it as þikke as is a braunched oke
And what' man þat' is wounded wiþ þe stroke
Schal neuer be hol til þat' yow list' of' grace
To stroke him wiþ þe plat' in þilke place
Ther he is hurt' þis is as moche to sayn
ye moote with þe platte swerd agayn
Stroke him on þe wounde and it' wil close
This is a verray soth wiþouten glose
It' failleþ nought' whiles it' is in youre hold
And whan þis knight' haþ þus his tale told
he rydeth out' of' þe halle and doun he light'
his steede which þat' schon as sonne bright'
Stant' in þe court' stille as ony stoon
This knight' in to his chambre is lad anoon
And is vnarmed and to þe mete y-set'
The presentes ben ful richely y-fet'
This is to sein þe swerd and þe mirour
And born anon vnto þe hihe tour
Wiþ certein officers ordeyned þerfore
And vnto Canacee þe ryng' is bore
Solempnely þer sche sitt' atte table
But' sikerly wiþouten eny fable /

The hors of bras þat may nat be remewed
It stant as it were to þe ground y-glewed
Ther may noman out of þe place it dryue
ffor non engyn of wyndas or polyue / 184
And cause why for þey can nouȝt þe craft
And þerfore in the place þei han it laft
Til þat þe knight haþ taught hem þe maneere
To voyden him as ȝe schal after heere 188
Gret was þe prees þat swarmed to and fro [leaf 93]
To gauren on þis hors þat stondeþ so
ffor it so heih was and so brood and long
So wel *pro*porciouned for to be strong 192
Right as it were a steede of lumbardye
Ther with so horsly and so quyk of ye
As it a gentil poyleys courser were
ffor certes fro his tail vnto his eere 196
Nature ne art ne couþe him nought amende
In no degre as al þe poeple wende
But euermore here mooste wonder it was
how þat it cowde gon and was of Bras 200
It was of ffaierye as þe peple semede
diu*er*se folk diu*er*sely han demede
As many heedes as many wittes *per* been
They murmerede as don a swarm of been 204
And maden skyles after here fantasyes
Rehersyng of þe olde poetries .i. eq*us* pedasdus
And seyden it was lik þe Pagasee
The hors þat hadde wynges for to flee 208
Or elles it was þe Grekes hors Synoñ
That broughte troye to destructioñ
As men in þise olde gestes reede
Myn herte quod oon is eu*er*emore in drede 212
I trowe som men of armes ben þer Inne
That schapen hem þis cite for to wynne
It were right good þat alle swich þing were knowe
Anoþer rowned to his felawe lowe 216

And seyde he lyeth for it is raþere lik
An apparence y-maad by som magyk
As Iogelours pleyen at þese festes grete /
Of sondry þoughtes þus þey Iangle and trete
As lewed peple demeþ *com*munly
Of þinges þat been more maad subtily
Than þey can in here lewednesse comp*re*hende /
They demen gladly to þe baddere ende
And some of hem wondren on þe miro*ur* [leaf 93, back]
That born was vp vnto þe maistre tour
how men might in it suche þinges se
Anoþer answerde and seyde it might wel be
Naturelly by composicioñs
Of aungels and of sleygh reflexioñs
And seyde þat in Rome was such oon
They speke of alocen and vitilion
And of aristotle þat writen in here lyues
Of queinte mirours and of *per*spectyues
As knowen þey þat han here bookes herde
And oþer folk han wondred on þe swerde
That wolde perce þurgh euery þing
And fille in speche of Thelophus þe king
And of achilles for his queinte spere /
ffor he couþe with it boþe hele and dere /
Right in swich wise as men may wiþ þe swerd
Of which right now ye haue youre seluen herd
They speken of sondry hardyng of metalle
And speke of medicynes þer wiþalle
And how and whanne it scholde harded be
Which is vnknowe algate vnto me /
Tho speeke þey of Canaces ryng
And seyden alle þat swich a wonder þing
Of craft of rynges herde þey neuere non
Saue þat he moyses and king Salomon
hadde a name of konnyng in swich art
Thus seyen þe peple and drawen hem a part

But' naþeles so*m*me seyde þat it was
Wonder to maken of' fern aisshen glas
And ȝit' is glas not' lik' aisshen of' fern
But' for þey han knowen it so fern
Therfore ceseþ here Ianglyng' and here wonder
As sore wondren some on cause of þonder
On ebbe and flood on gossomer and on myst /
And alle þing' til þe cause is wist' [leaf 91]
Thus Ianglen þei and demen and deuyse
Til þat' þe king' gan fro his bord arise
¶ Phebus haþ laft' þe angle meridional
And ȝit' ascendyng' was þe best' roial
The gentil leon̄ wiþ his Aldrian
Whan þat' þis Tartre kyng' Kambynskan
Ros from his bord ther as he sat' ful hye
Biforn him goþ þe lowde menstralcie /
Til he com to his chambre of' p*ar*amentz
Ther as þey sownen diuerse instrumentz
That' is lik' an heuene for to heere /
Now dauncen lusty venus children deere
ffor in þe fisshe hir lady sat' ful hye Piscis
And lokeþ on hem with a freendy yhe
This noble king' is set' vp on his troone
This straunge knight' is fet' to him ful sone /
And on þe daunce he goþ with Canacee
here is þe reuel and þe Iolite
That is nat' able a dul man to deuyse /
he moste han knowe loue and his seruise /
And ben a festlich man as freisch as may
That' scholde ȝow deuisen such array
who couþe telle yow þe forme of' daunces
So vncouthe and such freissche continaunces
Swich subtile lokynges and dissimulynges
ffor drede of' Ialouseye mennes ap*er*ceyuynges
Noman but lan̄celet' and he is deed
Therfore I passe ouer al þis lustyhed

I say nomore but' in þis Iolynesse
I lete hem til men to soper hem dresse
The stiward bit' spices for to hye
And eek' þe wyn in al þis melodye
The vssheres and þe squyers ben y-gon
The spices and þe wyn is come anon
They eete and dronke and whan þis hadde an ende
vnto þe temple as resoun was þey wende [leaf 91, back]
¶ The seruise doon. þey soupen al by day
What needeþ you rehersen here aray
Ech man woot' wel þat' at/ a kinges feste
haþ plente to þe meste and to þe leste
And deyntees mo þan ben in my knowyng'
And after souper goþ þis noble king'
To seen þis hors of' bras wiþ al a route
Of' lordes and of' ladyes him aboute
Swich wondryng' was þer on þis hors of' bras
That' siþþen þe grete seege of' Troye was
Ther as men wondren on an hors also
Ne was þer swich a wondryng' as was þo /
But' finally þe king' askeþ þe knigħt'
The vertue of' þis courser and þe migħt'
And preyde him to telle his gouernañce
The hors anon bigan to trippe and daunce
Whan þat' þis knigħt' layde hond vpon his reyne /
And seyde sire þer is namore to seyne
But' whan þou list' to ryden eny where
ye moote trille a pyn stant' in his eere
which I schal telle you bitwen vs tuo /
ye moot' nempne him to what' place also
Or to what' Contre þat yow list' to ryde
And whan ye come þer as yow list' tabyde
Bid him descende and trille anoþer pyn
ffor þer-in liþ þeffect' of' al þat' gyn
And wole doun descende and don your wille
And in þat' place he wol abyde stille

þeigh alle þe world hadde þe contrarie swore
he schal not þennes be þrowe ne y-bore
Of if yow liste bidde him þennes gon
Trille þis pynne and he wil vanyssche anon
Out of þe sight of euery maner wight
And come ayein be it day or night
whan þat yow list to clepen him agayn
In swich a gyse as I schal to yow sayn [leaf 95]
Bitwixen yow and me and þat ful soone
Ryd whan yow list þer is no more to doone
Enformed whan þe kyng was of þe knight
And haþ conceyued in his witt aright
The maner and þe forme of alle þis þing
fful glad and bliþe þe noble doughty kyng
Repeyryng to his reuel as biforn
The brydel is in to þe tour y-born
And kept among his Ieweles lief and diere
The hors vanyssht y not in what manere
Out of here sight ye gete namore of me
But þus I lete in lust and Iolite
This Kambynskan his lordes festeynge
Til wel neigh þe day bigan to springe

¶ Explicit prima pars

¶ The Stag of an hert

¶ The norice of digestiõ is slepe
Gan on hem wynke and bad hem take kepe
That moche mete and labour wol haue reste /
And with a galpyng hem alle he keste /
And seyde þat it was tyme to lye a doun
ffor blood was in his dominaciõ
Cherisshe þ blood natures frend quod he
þey þanken him galpynge by tuo by þre
And euery wight gan drawen him to his reste
As sleep hem bad þey tooke it for þe beste

here dremes schulle not' mowe be told for me
fful were here heedes of' fumosite
That' causeþ drem of' which þer is no charge /
They sleepen til it' was pryme large /
The moste part' but' it' were Canace
Sche was ful mesurable as wo*m*men be
ffor of' hire fader hadde sche take hir leeue
To go to reste sone after it' was eue
hir list' not' appalled for to be
ffor on þe morwe vnfestlich for to see /
And slepte hir ferste sleep and awok' [leaf 95, back]
ffor swich a ioye sche in hir herte took'
Boþe of' hire queynte ryng' and hire mirour
That twenty tyme sche chaungeth hire colour
And in hire sleep right' for impression
Of' hire mirour sche hadde a visiõ
Wherfore ar þat' þe sonne vp gan glyde
Sche cleped vp on hire maystresse bysyde
And seyde þat' hir liste for to arise
Thise olde wo*m*men þat' ben gladly wyse
As is hire maystresse answerde anon
And seyde ma dame whider wolde ye gon
Thus erely for folk' ben alle in reste
I wole quod sche arise for me leste /
No lengere sleepen but' walken aboute
hire maistresse clepeþ wo*m*men a gret' route /
And vp þey risen wel ten or twelue
vp riseþ freisshe Canace hir selue
As rody as bright' as þey þe yonge sonne
That' in þe Ram. is ten degrees vpronne
Non hiher was he whan sche redy was
And forth sche walkede eesyly a pas
Arrayed after þe lusty sesoñ soote
lightly for to pleye and walke on foote
Nat' but' .v. or .vj. of' hire meyne
And in a trench fer in þe park' goþ sche

The vapour which þat fro þe erþe glood
makeþ þe sonne to seeme rody and brood
But naþeles it was so fair a sight
That it made alle here hertes for to light
What for þe sesoun and þe morwenynge
And for þe foules þat sche herde synge
ffor right anon sche wiste what þey mente
Right by here song and knew alle here entente
// The knotte why þat euery tale is told
If it be taryed til lust be cold
Of hem þat han it herkned after yore [leaf 96]
The sauour passeþ euer lenger þe more
ffor fulsomnesse of *prolixite*
And by þis same resoun þenkeþ me
I scholde to þe knotte condescende
And maken of hire walkyng sone an ende
¶ Amydde a tree for-drye as whit as chalk/
As Canacee was pleyng in hire walk
Ther sat a ffaukoñ ouer hir heed ful hye
That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
That al þe woode resede of hire crye
And beten hadde hire self so pitously /
With boþen hire wynges til þe reede blood
Ran endelong/ þe tree þer as sche stood
And euer in oon sche cryed alwey and schrighte
And with hire beek hir seluen so sche pighte
That þer ne was tygre ne cruel beste
That dwelleþ eyþer in woode or in foreste
þat nolde han wept if þat he wepe couþe
ffor sorwe of hire sche schright alwey so louþe
ffor þer nas neuere yit/ no man on lyue
If þat I couþe a fawkoñ wel descryue
That herde of such anoþer of fayrnesse
As wel of plumage as of gentilnesse
Of schap of al þat mighte rekened be
A fawkoñ *peregryn* þanne semed sche

Of fremde londe and euermore as sche stood
Sche swounede now and now for lak of blood
Til wel neigh is sche fallen fro þe tree
This faire kinges doughter þis kanacee
That on hir fynger bar þe queynte ryng
þurgh which sche vnderstood wel euery þing
That any foul may in his ledne sayn
And kowde answere him in his ledne agayn
haþ vnderstande þat þis fawkon sayde
And wel neigh for þe rouþe almost sche deyde
And to þe tree sche goþ ful hastily [leaf 96, back]
And on þis fawkon lokeþ pitously
And held hire lappe abrood for wel sche wiste /
The fawkon moste falle from þe twyste /
whan þat it swownede next for lakke of blood
A long while to wayte hire sche stood
Til atte laste sche spak in þis maneere
Vnto þe hauk as ȝe schal after heere
what is þe cause if it be for to telle
That ye ben in þis furial peyne of helle
Quod Canacee vnto þis hawk aboue
Is þis for sorwe of deth or los of loue
ffor as I trowe þise beþ causes tuo
That causen moost a gentil herte woo
Of oþer harm it redeþ nought/ to speke
ffor þi your self vpon your self yow wreke
which þat proueþ wel þat eyþer Ire or drede
Moot ben encheson of youre cruel dede
Syn þat I se non oþer wight yow chace
ffor loue of god so doþ your selue grace
Or what may be your help for west nor est
Ne saugh I neuer er now no bryd ne best
That ferde with himself so pitously
ye slee me with youre sorwe verrayly
I haue of yow so gret compassioun
ffor goddes loue com fro þe tree a doun

And as I am a kinges doughter trewe
If' þat' I verraily þe causes knewe
Of' youre disease if' it' lay in my might'
I wolde amende it' or þat' it' were night'
Als wisly help me grete god of' kynde
And herbes schal I right' ynowe fynde
To hele wiþ ȝour hurtes hastily
Tho schrighte þis faukoñ yet' more pitously
Than euer sche dide and fil to grounde anon
And liþ on swowne deed as ony stoon
Til Canacee haþ in hir lappe hire take [leaf 97]
vnto þat' tyme sche gan of' swowne awake /
And after þat' sche of' swowne gan abreide
Right' in hir hawkes leodne þus sche seyde
That' pite renneth sone in gentil herte
ffeelyng' his similitude in peynes smerte /
Is proued alday as men may it see
As wel by werk' as by auctorite
ffor gentil herte kepeþ gentillesse
I se wel þat' ye han of' my distresse
Compassioñ my faire Canace /
Of' verray wommanly benignite /
That' nature in youre principles haþ set'
But' for non hope for to fare þe bet'
But' for to obeye vnto youre herte fre /
And for to maken oþer be war by me /
As by þe whelp chastised is þe leoñ
Right' for þat' cause and for þat' conclusioñ
Whil þat' I haue a leyser and a space
Myn harm I wol confessen er I pace
And euer whil sche can hir sorwe tolde
That' oþer wepte as sche to water wolde
Til þat' þe fawkoñ bad hir to be stille /
And with a sike þus sche seyde hire tille
Ther I was bred allas þat' ilke day
And fostred in a roche of' marbul gray

So tendrely þat' noþing' eylede me
I ne wiste nought' what' was aduersite
Til I couþe flee ful hye vnder þe sky
þo dwelte a tercelet' me faste by
That' semede welle of' alle gentilnesse
Al were he ful of' tresoñ and falsnesse /
It' is wrapped vnder humble cheere
And vnder hiew of' trouþe and in swich manere
Vnder plesance and vnder bysy peyne
That' no wight' couþe han wende he coude feyne
So deepe in greyn he dyed his colours [leaf 97, back]
Right as a serpent hit' him vnder flours
Til he may se his tyme for to byte
Right' so þis god of' loues ypocrite
Doþ so his cerymonijs obeissances
And kepte in semblañt alle his obseruances
That' sowneþ in to gentilesse of' loue
As in a tombe is al þe faire aboue
And vnder is þe corps swich as ȝe woot'
Swich was þis ypocrite boþe cold and hoot'
And in þis wise he serued his entente
That' saue þe feende non wiste what' he mente
Til he so longe hadde wopen and compleyned
And many a yeer his seruise to me feyned
Til þat' myn herte to pitous and to nyce
Al Innocent' of' his crowned malice
ffor-fered of' his deþ as þoughte me
vpon his oþes and his seurte
Grauntede him loue vpon þis condicioñ
That' euer mo myn honour & renoūn
were saued boþe preuy and apert'
This is to sein þat' after his dissert'
I yaf' him al myn herte and my þought'
God woot' and he þat' oþer wise nought'
And tok' his herte in chaunge of' myn for ay
But' soþ is seyd go sethen many a day

A trewe wight' and a þeef' þenkeþ nat' oon
And whan he saugh þe þing' so fer y-gon
That' I grauntede him fully my loue /
In swich a gyse as I haue sayd aboue /
And yeuen him my trewe herte as fre /
As he swore he yaf' his herte to me /
Anon þis Tygre ful of' doublenesse
ffil on his knees wiþ so deuoute humblesse
wiþ hye reuerence and as by his cheere /
So lik' a gentil louere of' manere /
So rauysshed as it' semede for þe ioye [leaf 98]
That' neuere Iason ne paris of' Troye
Iason certes ne non oþer man
Syn lameth was þat' Aldirfirst' bygan
To louen tuo as writen folk' biforn
Ne neuer sipþe þe firste man was born
Ne couþe man by twenty þousand part'
Countrefete þe sophimes of' his art'
Ne were worþi to vnbokele his galoche
Ther doublenesse or feynyng' scholde aproche
Ne so couþe þanke a wight' as he dide me /
his manere was an heuene for to se
Til eny wo*m*man were sche neuer so wys
So peynted he and kembeþ at' poynt' devys
As wel his wordes as his continañce
And I so loued him for his obeissañce
And for þe trouþe I demed in his herte
That' if' so were þat' any þing' him smerte
Al were it' neuer so lite and I it' wiste
Me þoughte I felte deþ at' myn herte twiste
And schortly so ferforth þis þing' went'
That' my wille has his willes Instrument'
This is to sein my wille obeyede his wille
In alle þing' as fer as reson̄ fille
Kepyng' þe boundes of' my worschipe euere
Ne neuer hadde I þing' so leef' ne leuere

As him god woot' ne neuere schal no mo
This laste lengere þan a yer or tuo
¶ That' I supposed of' him no þing' but good
But' fynally þus atte laste it stood
That' fortune wolde þat' he moste twynne
Out' of' þat' place which þat' I was Inne
Wher me was wo it' is no questiõ
I kan not' make of' it' discripcioñ
ffor o þing' dar I telle boldely
I knowe what' is þe peyne of' deþ þer by
Such harm I felte for he ne mighte beleue [leaf 98]
So on a day of' me he tok' his leue /
So sorwfully eek' I wende verrayly
That' he hadde feeled as moche harm as I
Whan þat' I herde him speke and sawe his hewe /
But' naþeles I þoughte he was so trewe/
And eek' þat' he repaire scholde agayn
Wiþinne a litel while soþ to sayn
And resoñ wolde eek' þat' he moste go
ffor his honour as ofte happeþ so
That' I made vertu of' necessite /
& took' it' wel syn þat' it / moste be
As I best' mighte I hidde from him my sorwe
And took' him by þe hond seint' Iohñ to borwe
And seyde þus lo I am youres al
Beþ swich as I haue be to yow and schal
What' he answerde it' needeþ nat' reherse
Who can seyn bet' þan he who can do werse
Whan he haþ al wel seyd þan haþ he doon
Therfore byhoueþ him a wel long' spoon
That' schal eten wiþ a feend þus herde I seye /
So atte laste he moot' forþ his weye
And forthi he fleþ til he com þer him leste
Whan it' com him to purpos for to reste /
I trowe he hadde þilke text' in mynde / ¶ Redituí suo singula gaudentí.
That' alle þing' repeyryng' to his kynde /

Gladeþ himself' / þus seyn men as I gesse /
Men louen of' propre kynde newfangilnesse /
As briddes doon þat' men in cages feede /
ffor þeigh þou night' & day take of' hem heede /
And strawe here cages faire as softe as silk'
And yeue hem sucre hony bred and mylk'
Yet' right' anon as þat' his dore is vppe
he wiþ his feet' wil sporne doun his cuppe
And to þe woode he wole and wormes ete
So newefangel ben þei of' here mete
And louen noueleries of' propre kynde [leaf 99]
No gentilesse of' blood may hem bynde
So ferde þis tercelet' allas þe day
Though he were gentil born fressche and gay
And goodly for to seen and humble and fre
he saugh vpon a tyme a kyte flee
And sodeinly he loued þe kyte so
That alle his loue is clene fro me go
And haþ his trouþe falsed in þis wyse
Thus haþ þe kite my loue in hire seruise
And I am lorn wiþoute remedye
And wiþ þat' word þis faukoñ gan to crye
And swouned eft/ in Canacees barm
Gret' was þe sorwe for þe haukes harm
That' Canacee and alle hire wommen maade
They nyste how þey mighte þe fawkoñ glade
But' Canacee home bereþ hire in hire lappe
And softely in plastres gan hire wrappe
Ther as sche with hir beek' haþ hurt' hir selue
Now kan not' Canace but' herbes delue
Out' of' þe grounde and maken salues newe
Of herbes preciouses and fyn of' hewe
To helen wiþ þe hauk' fro day to nyght'
Sche doþ hir besynesse and alle hire myght
And by hire beddes heed sche made a muwe
And couered it' with veluettes bluwe

In signe of' trouþe þat' is in wo*m*mèn seene
And alle wiþoute þe muwe is peynted greene
In which were peynted alle þese false fowles
As ben þise tydifs tercelettes and owles
Right' for þe spyte were peynted hem bysyde
Pyes on hem for to crye and chyde
Thus leet I Canacee hire hawk' keeping'
I wole nomore as now speke of' hire ryng'
Til it' come eft' to purpos for to seyn
how þat' þis ffaukon) gat' hire loue ageyn
Repentañt' as þe storie telleþ vs [leaf 99, back]
By mediacioñ of' Camballus
The kinges sone of' which I yow tolde /
But' hennes forth I wol *proces* holde
To speke of' auentures and of' batailles
That' yet' was neuer herde so gret' meruailles
ffirst' wil I telle yow of' Kambynskan
That' in his tyme many a cite wan
And after wol I speke of' Algarsif'
how þat' he wan Theodora to his wyf'
ffor whan ful ofte in gret' *per*il he was
Ne hadde he ben holpen by þe hors of' bras
And after wol I speken) of' Camballo
That' faught' in listes with þe bre*þer*en tuo
ffor Canacee er þat' he might' hir wynne
And þer I lefte I wol ageyn bygynne
Appolo whirleth vp his char so hye Apollo i. sol.
Til þat' þe god mercurius hous þe slye / ¶ Explicit .ij^a^ *pars*.

GROUP D. FRAGMENT V.

§ 1. WIFE OF BATH'S PREAMBLE.

CORPUS MS.

Prologus vxoris de Bathe. [*headline*] [leaf 100]

¶ Prologus vxoris
de Bathe .C°.vij°.

Experiment' þough non auctorite
Were in þis world is right' ynough for me
To speke of' wo þat' is in mariage
ffor lordynges syn I twelue ȝeer was of' age /
Thanked be god þat' is eterne alyue
housbondes atte chirche dore I haue had fyue/
If' I so often might' haue wedded be
But' alle were worþy men in here degre
But' me was told certein nought' longe agones
[that criste ne wente / neuere but onys] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
To weddyng' in þe Cane of' Galile /
That' by þilke ensample taught' he me
That' I ne schulde wedded be but' ones
herk' eek' lo which a scharpe worde for' þe nones
Besyde a welle Ihesu god and man
Spak' in repreef' of' þe Samaritan
Thow hast' y-hadde .v. housebondes quod he.
And þat' ilke man þat' now haþ þe
Is not' þin housbonde þus sayde he certayne
What' he mente þer-by I can nought sayne
Wele But' þat/ I axe why þe fyfte man
Was non housbonde to þe Samaritan
how many might' sche han in mariage
[1]ȝitt' hardde I neuere telle in al myn age

[1] *This line is by another hand, over an erasure.*

Vppon þis nombre diffinicioun
Men may deuyne and glosen vp and doun
But wel I woot expresse wiþouten lye
God bad vs for to wexe and multiplye 2
That gentil text can I wel vnderstonde
Eke wel I woot he seyde myn housebonde
Schulde lete fader & mooder and take to me ¶ Relinquet homo patrem & matrem & adherebit &c/
But of noon nombre mensioñ made he /
Of Bigamye or of Octogamye 33
Why schulde men þenne haue it in vilanye /
loke here þe wise man king Salomon
I trowe he hadde wyues moo þan on ¶ Genesis ij°. Quamobrem
Now wolde god it leeful were to me / 37
To be refreisshed half so ofte as he [leaf 100, back]
Which ȝifte of god hadde he for alle his wyues
No man haþ such þat in þis world a lyue is 40
God wot þis noble king as to my witte
The firste night hadde many a mery fitte
Wiþ iche of hem so wel was him alyue
Blissed be god þat I haue wedded fyue 44
Welcome þe sixte whan þat euer he schal
ffor siþþe I wille nought kepe chaste in al
Whan myn housebonde is fro þe world y-gon
Som crystne man schal wedde me anon 48
ffor þan þe apostle seiþ þat I am free
To wedde a goddes half wher it likeþ me
he seiþ þat to be wedded is no senne ¶ Melius est nubere quam vri
Betre is it to be wedded þan to brenne 52
What rekkeþ me þough folk sey vylanye
Of schrewed lameth and his Bygamye /
I woot wel Abraham was an holy man
And Iacob eek as fer as euer I can 56
And ech of hem hadde wyues mo þan tuo
And many anoþer holy man also
Wher can ȝe say in any maner age
That vs god defended mariage 60

By expresse word I pray yow telleþ me
Or wher comaunded he *vir*ginite
I wot' as wel as ye it' is no drede
þe apostel whan he speke þ of' maydenhede
he seyde þer-of' precepte hadde he noone
Men may counseille a wo*m*man to ben oone
But' counseilling' is no comaundeme*n*t
he putte it' in oure owne Iuggement'
ffor hadde god co*m*maunded maydenhede
þanne hadde he dampned weddyng' with þe dede
And certes if' þer were no seed y-sowe
virginite þanne wher-of' scholde it' growe
Poule dorste nought' comanden at' þe leste
A-þing' of' which his mayster ȝaf' him non heste [leaf 101]
The darte is sette vppe fro virginite
Chase who so may who so renneþ best' lat' see
But' þis word is nought' take of' euery wight'
But' þere as god wolde yeue it' of' his might'
I wot' wel þat' þe apostel was a mayde /
But' naþeles þough þat' he wrot' or sayde
he wolde þat' euery wight' were such as he /
Al nys nat' but' counseile to *vir*ginite
And for to be a wijf' he yaf' me leue
Of' Indulgence so is it' no repreue
To wedde me if' þat' my make deye /
Wiþoute excepcioñ of' Bygamie /
Al were it good no wo*m*man for to touche
he mente as his body or in his couche
ffor *per*il is boþe to touche and for to assemble
ȝe knowe what' þis ensample may resemble
This al and some he heeld *vir*ginite
More *per*fyt' þan wedded in freelte
ffreltee clepe I not' but' þat' he and sche
Wolde leede here lijf' al in chastite
I *gra*unte it' wel I haue non envye
Though maydenhede preferre Bygamye

It liketh hem to be clene in body and gost
Of myn estate I wole make no boost
ffor wel ȝe knowe a lord in his houshold
hath not euery vessele of golde /
Some ben of tree / and doon here lord seruise
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise
And euerich hath of god a *propre* ȝifte /
Some this some that as him liketh schifte
virginite is gret *perfection*
And conscience eek with deuocioun
But crist that of *perfection* is welle
Bad nought euery wight he schulde selle
Al that he hadde and ȝiue it to the pore
And in swich wise folwe him and his lore [leaf 101, back]
he spak to hem that wolde lyue parfitly ¶ Mathei xix°. Dixit autem ihesus vade & vende *omnia* que *habes* & da pauperibus
And lordynges by ȝoure leue that am not I
I wole bystowe the flour of alle myn age
In charite and fruyt of maryage
Telle me also to what conclusioun
Were membres maade of generacioun
And of so *parfyt* wise and why y-wrought
Triste right wel they were not made for nought
Glose who so wile and seye bothe vp and doun
That they were made for purgacioun
Of vryne and oure bothe pinges smale
Were eek to knowe a femal from a male
And for non oother cause what seye ȝe no?
The exp*er*ience woot it is nouȝt so
So that the clerkes be not with me wrothe
I seye this that they maked be for bothe
This is to seyn for office and for ese
Of engendrynge thare we not god displese
Why schulden men elles in here bokes sette
That man schal yelde to his wijf his dette
Now wher-wip scholde he paye his payement
yf that he ne vsed his seely instrument

Than were þey maade vpon a creature
To purgie vryne and eek' for engendure
But' I seye nought' þat' eu*e*ry wight' is holde
That' haþ such harneys as I to yow of' tolde
To gon and vsen hem in engendrure
Thanne scholde men take of' chastite no cure
Crist' was a mayden and schapen as a man
And many a seynt' syn þat' þe world bygan
Yet' lyued þey euere in p*ar*fyt' chastite
I nel envye with no virginite
lete hem ete brede of' pured whete seed
And late vs wyues ete barly breed
And yet' with barly breed Mark' telle can [' *catchword: a leaf out; a sheet misplaced*]
Oure lord' [Ihesu refresshed / many a man [MS Arch. Seld. B.14, *leaf* 84, *back*]
in suche estate as god hath cleped vs
I wol p*er*ceiver / I am nought p*re*cious
in wiffhode wol I vse myn instrument
as frely as my maker / hath hit sent
yiff I be dangerous / god yeve me sorowe
myn housbonde shal it haue both eve *and* amorwe
whan that him list / com forth *and* pay his dette
an housbonde wol I haue / I wol not lette
which shal be / both my dettour *and* my thralle
and han his tribulacioun with-alle
vppon his flesshe / while that I am his wiff
I haue the power' / durynge al my liff ¶ Ad *Corinthios* vij° vir sui corporis non habet potestatem set mulier &c
vppon his propre body / *and* not he
right thus the Appostel / tolde vn-to me
and bad oure housbondes / for to love vs welle
alle this sentence / me liketh eu*e*rydelle
Uppe sterte the pardoner / *and* that anoon
now dame q*uo*d he / bi god *and* bi seint Iohn
ye ben a noble prechoure / in this caas
I was abovte to wedde a wiff allaas
what shulde I bye it / on my flesshe so dere
yit had I lever wedde noon to yere

abyde q*uo*d she / my tale is not bigonne [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
nay thow shalt drynken / of another tonne
or that I go / shal sauour wers than ale [leaf 85]
and whan I haue tolde forth̄ my tale
of tribulacioun / that is in mariage
of which̄ I am expert / in myn age
this is to seie / my-silff hath̄ ben the whippe
than maistow chese / whether thow wilt sippe
of thilke tonne / that I shal abroche
be war of hit / or thow to nygh̄ approche
for I shal telle ensamples / mo than ten
who so that wil not / be war bi other men
by him shulle other men corrected be
these same wordis / writeth̄ Protholome ¶ Protholome
rede in his Almageste / *and* take it there
dame I wol pray yow / if youre wille were
seide this Pardoner / as ye bigan
telle forth̄ youre tale / spare for no man
and teche vs yongemen / of youre practike
gladly q*uo*d she / sith̄ it may yow like
but that I pray / to al this companye
if that I speke / after my fantesie
as taketh̄ nought agreff / of that I seye
for myn entente / is not / but for to pleye.

NOw sirs than shal I telle yow my tale
as euere mot y drynke wyn or ale
I shal sey soth / tho housbondes that I hadde
as thre of hem were goode / *and* two were badde
the thre were goode men / riche *and* olde
vnneth̄ myghten thei / the statute holde
in which̄ thei were bounden vn-to me
ye wot wel what I meene of this parde
as god me helpe / I laugh̄ whan I thynke
how pitously a nyght̄ / I made hem swynke
but bi my fay / I tolde of hit no store
thei hadde me yeve here londe / *and* here tresore

me nedede nought / do lenger diligence [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14
to wynne here love / *and* do hem reu*e*rence
they loued me so wel / bi god above [*leaf 85, back*]
that I ne tolde no deynte / of here love 208
a wise woman wol besy hir / eu*e*re in oon
to gete hir love / ye there as she hath noon
but sith I hadde hem / holly in myn honde
and that thei hadde / yeve me al here londe 212
what shulde I take kepe hem for to plese
but if it were my p*r*ofyte / *and* myn ease
I sette hem so a worke / bi my fay
that many a night / thei songen welaway 216
the Bac*o*un was not fette for hem I trowe [Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract stops*]
That' some men haue in Essexe at' Dunmowe [leaf 107; *for* 102]
I gouerned hem so wel after my lawe
That' iche of' hem ful blisful was and fawe / 220
To bringe me gay þinges fro þe feyre
They were ful glad whan I spak to hem faire [*This line is by another hand.*]
ffor god it woot' I chidde hem spytously
Now herkneþ how I bar me p*r*oprely 224
ye wyse wyues þat' can vnderstande
Thus schulde ye speke and bere hem wrong' on hande
ffor half' so boldely þer can no man
Swere and lye as a wo*m*man can 228
I seye not' þis by wyues þat' ben wise /
But' it' be whan þat' þey hem mysavyse /
A wise wijf' schal if' þat' sche can hire good
Bere him on hond þat' þe kow is wood 232
And take witnesse of' hir owne mayde /
Of' hire assent' but herkeþ how I sayde /
Sire olde kaynard is þis þin array
Why is my neyheboures wijf' so gay 236
Sche is honoured ouer al wher sche goþ
I sitte at' hom I haue no þrifty cloþ
What' dostow at' my neyhebores hous
Is sche so fair art' þou so amerous 240

What' roune ȝe wiþ oure mayde benedicite
Sire olde lechour let' þy iapes be /
And if' I haue a gossibb or a freende
Wiþoute gilte ȝe chide as a feende
If' þat' I walke or pleye vnto his hous
þou comest' home as drunken as a mous
And prechest' on þi benche wiþ euel preef'
þou seist' to me it is a gret' meschief'
To wedde a pouer wo*m*man for costage
And if' þat' sche be riche of' gret' parage
þanne seistow þat' it' is a tormentrie /
To suffre hire pryde and hire malencolie /
And if' þat' sche be fair þou verray knaue /
Thow seist' þat' euery holour wol hir haue / [leaf 107, back]
Sche may no while in chastite abyde
That' is assayed vppon eche syde
Thou seist' some folk' desire vs for richesse
Some for oure schapp and some for oure fayrnesse
And some for sche can oþer synge or daunce
þus saistow wernard god ȝiue þe meschañce
Some for here hondes and here armes smale
Thus goþ al to þe deuel by þy tale/
þou seist' men may not' kepe a castel walle
It' may so longe assailed ben ouer alle /
And if' þat' sche be foule þou seist' þat' sche
Coueiteþ euery man þat' sche may see
ffor as a spaynel sche wol on him lepe
Til þat' sche fynde som man þat' wol hir chepe
Ne non so grey goos goþ þer in þe lake
As seist' þou þat' wol be wiþouten make
And seist' it is an hard þing' for to weelde
A wight' þat' noman wille his þankes helde
Thus seistow lorel whan þou gost' to bedde
And þat' no wys man needeþ for to wedde
And noman þat' entendiþ to þe heuene
Wiþ wilde þunder dent' and fyre leuene /

Mote þy wicked necke be to-broke
þou seist' þat' droppyng' houses and eek' smoke
And chydyng' wyues maken men to fle
Out' of' here owne houses a benedicite
What' eyleþ swich an olde man for to chyde
Thou seist' we wyues wille oure vices hyde
Til we be faste and þanne we wille hem schewe
Wel may þis be a prouerbe of' a schrewe
Thou seist' þat' Oxen assen hors and houndes
They ben assayed at' diuerse stoundes
Bacynes lauours or þat' men hem bye
Spoones stooles and swich housbondrye
And so ben clopes pottes and oþer arrayes
But' of' wo*m*men aren maked non assayes [leaf 108, *for* 103]
Til þei ben wedded olde dotard schrewe
And seist' how þanne we wil oure vices schewe
Thou seist' also þat' it' displeses me
But' if' þou wille preyse my beaute
And but' þou poure alwey vpon my face
And clepe me faire dame in euery place
And but' þou make a feste on þat' ilke day
That' I was born and make me freische and gay
And but' þou do to my norys honour
And to my chambre wiþinne my bour
And to my fadres folk' and his allyes
Thus seist' þou olde barel ful of' lyes
And yit of' oure apprentys Iankyn
ffor his crispe heer schynynge so gold fyn
And for he squyeres me boþe vp and doun
yet' hastow þought' and fals suspecioñ
I wil him nought' þough þou were deed to morwe
But' telle me þis why hydest' þou with sorwe
Thy keyes of' þi cheste away fro me /
It' is my good as wel as þin *par*de
What' wenestow make an ydyot' of' oure dame /
Now by þat' lord þat' called is seint' Iame

þou schalt not boþe þough þou were wood
Be maister of my body and my good
That oon þou schalt forgo maugre þin eyȝen
What helpeþ it on me enquere and spyen
I trowe þough þou woldest loke me in þi cheste
þou scholdest seie wyf go where þe leste
Take youre disporte I wol not leue no tales
I knowe ȝow for a good wyf dame Alis
We loue no man þat takeþ keepe or charge
Where þat we go we wole be at oure large
Of alle men blessed mote he be
The wise astrologien dann ptholome
That seiþ þis *prouerbe* in his almageste
Of alle men his wisdam is hyeste [leaf 108, back]
That rekkeþ not who haþ þe world in hande
By þis *prouerbe* þou schalt wel vnderstande
haue þou ynough what þar þe rekke or kare
how meryly þat oþer folkes fare
ffor certes olde dotard by youre leue
ye schulle haue queynte right ynough at eue
he is to gret a nygard þat wol warne
A man to light a candel at his lantarne
he schal haue neuer þe lesse light/ parde
haue þou ynough þe þar not pleyne þe
þou seist also þat if þou make vs gay
Wiþ cloþing or with *pre*cious array
That it is *per*il of oure chastite
And ȝit with wordes þou most enforce me /
And seie þise wordes in þe apostels name
In habyt made with chastite and schame
ye wo*m*men schulle apparaille you *quod* he/
And nat in tressed heer and gay perre
As perle ne wiþ golde ne cloþes riche
After þi texte ne after þi rubriche
I wol not werke as mochil as a gnatt
þou saydest als þat I was like a catt

But' who so wolde senge a cattes skyn
þanne wolde þe catt' wel dwellen in his In
And if' þe cattes skyn be slike and gay
Sche nel not' dwelle in house half' a day
But' forþ sche wille or ony day be dawed
To schewe hire skyn and go a caterwrawed
þis is to say if' I be gay sir schrewe
I wil renne out' my borel for to schewe
Sire olde fool what' helpeþ þe to spien
They þou prey argus with his þousand yhen
To be my warde corps as he can best'
In feiþ he schal not' kepe me but' if' me lest
yet' couþe I make his berd so mote I þee
þou seist' eek' þat' þer ben þinges þree
þe whiche þinges troublen al þis Erþe
And þat' no wight' may endure þe ferþe
O leue sire schrewe ihesu schorte þi lijf'
yet' prechest' þou and seist' an hateful wijf'
y-rekned is for oon of' þis meschances
Ben þer non oþer maner resemblances
þat' ye may likene 3oure parables to
But' if' a sely wijf' be on of' þo
And likenest' wommannes loue to helle
To bareyne lond þer water may not' dwelle
þou likenest' it/ also to wilde fyre
The more it brenneth þe more it' haþ desire
To consume eny þing' þat' brende wolde be
Thou seist' þat' right' as wormes schende a tree
Right' so a wyf' destroyeþ hir housebonde
This knowen þey þat' ben to wyues bonde
lordynges right' þus 3e han vnderstande
Bar I stifly myn olde housbondes on hande
þat' þus þey seyden in here drunkenesse
And eek' þat' he hadde suspecion and Ielousnesse
On Iankyn and on my nefe also
O lord þe peyne I dede hem and þe woo

argus habuit mille oculos.

[leaf 109, for 104]

ffful gilteles by goddes sweete pyne
ffor as an hors I coupe bope byte and whyne
I coupe pleyne and I was in pe gilte
Or elles ofte tyme I hadde ben spilte
Who so pat' first' to mylle comp ferst' grynte
I pleyned first' so was oure werre stynte
pey were ful glade to excusen hem ful blyue /
Of' ping' which pei agilte neuer here lyue
Of' wenches wolde I beren hem on honde
Whan pat' for sike pey might' vnnepe stonde
yet' tykeled I his herte for pat he
Wende I hadde of' him so gret' chiertee
I swore pat' al my walkynge be night'
Was for to aspye wenches pat' he dighte [leaf 109, back]
vnder pat' colour hadde I many a myrpe
ffor alle such witte is ziue vs in oure birpe
Desceipte wepyng' spynnyng' god hap ziue
To woman kyndely whil pat' pei may lyue ¶ ffallere fiere nere dedit deus in muliere
And pus of' o ping' I auaunte me
At' pe ende I hadde pe beste in eche degre
By sleighte or force or by som maner ping'
As by continuel murmur and gruecching'
Namely a bedde hadde pey meschaunce
Ther wolde I chide and do hem no plesaunce
I wolde no lenger in pe bedde abyde
If' pat' I felte his arm ouer my syde
Til he hadde made his raunsom vnto me
Thanne wolde I suffre him do his nycete
And perfore euery man pis tale I telle
Wynne who so may al are for to selle
Wip empty hande men may non haukes lure
ffor wynnyng' wolde I al his lust' endure
And make me a feyned appetyt'
And zit' in bakon hadde I neuer delit/
That' maked me pat' euer I wolde him chyde
ffor pough pe pope hadde sete him besyde

I wolde nou3t spare him at his oughne bord
ffor by my troupe I quitte him word for word
As helpe me verrey god omnipotent
þough I right now schulde make my testament
I ne owe him a word þat it nys quitte
I brought it so aboute by my witte
That he muste 3iue it vp as for þe beste /
Or elles hadde we neuere ben in reste
ffor þough he loked as a leoun
3et scholde he faile of his conclusioñ
Thenne wolde I seye now goode leef take keepe /
how mekely lokeþ wilkyn oure scheepe
Com ner my spouse lat me ba þi cheeke
3e schulle be al pacient and meeke [leaf 110, *for* 105]
And han a sweete spiced conscience /
Syn 3e so preche of Iobis pacience
Suffreþ alwey syn 3e so wel can *preche*
And but 3e do certein we schul 3ou teche
That it is fair to haue a wyf in pees
On of vs moot bowen doutelees
And sipþe a man is more resonable
Than woman is sire 3e moste be suffrable /
What eyleþ 3ou to grucche þus and grone
Is it for 3e wolde haue my queynte allone
Whi tak it al / lo haue it euery del
Petir I schrewe 3ou but 3e loue me wel
ffor If I wolde selle my bele chose
I coupe walke as freissche as a rose
But I wil kepe it for 3our owne top
3e be to blame by god I seye 3ou sop
Suche maner wordes hadde we on honde
Now wol I speke of my ferþe housbonde /
¶ My ferþe housbond was a reuelour
This is to seye he hadde a *paramour*
And I was yong and ful of Ragerie
Styborne and strong and ioly as a pye

lord how coupe I daunce to an harpe smale /
And synge ywys as eny nyghtyngale /
Whan I hadde dronke a draughte of sweete wyn
Meteling pe foule cherle pe swyn
That with a staf byraft his wif hir lyf
ffor sche drank wyn pough I hadde ben his wijf
Ne schulde he nought han daunted me fro drynke
And after wyn on venus most I pinke
ffor also syker as colde engendreþ hayl
A likerous mouþ moste han a likerous tail
In womman violent is no defence
This knowen lecchoures by experience
But lord crist whan pat it remembreþ me /
vpon my 3ouþe and my Iolyte [leaf 110, back]
It tykeleþ me about myn herte roote
vnto þis day it doþ myn herte boote
þat I haue had my world as in my tyme
But age allas þat al wol envenyme
haþ me byraft my beaute and my piþ
lat go far wel þe deuel go þer-wiþ
The flour is gon þer is nomore to telle
The bren as I best can now moot I selle
But 3et to be right mery wol I fonde /
Now forþ to telle of my ferþe housbonde
I seye I hatte in herte gret despyt
That he of eny oþer hadde delyt
But he was quyte by god and by sent Iose
I made him of þe same woode a crose
Not of my body in no foul manere
But certeinly I made folk such cheere
That in his owne grece I made him frye
ffor angery and for verray Ialousie /
By god in erþe I was his purgatorie
ffor which I hope his soule be in glorie /
ffor god it wot he sat ful ofte and song
Whan þat his scho ful bitterly him wrong

ffor þer was non sauf' god and he þat' wiste
In many wise where I him twiste
he deyed whan I cam fro Ierusalem
And liþ y-graue vnder þe Roode beem
Al nys his tombe not' so curious
As was þe sepulcre of' him Darius
Which þat' appelles wroughten subtilly
It' nys but' waste to burye him *pre*ciously
lat' him far wel god ȝiue his soule reste
he is now in his graue and in his cheste
¶ Now of' my fyfþe housbonde wil I telle
God late neuer his soule come in helle /
And ȝit' was he to me þe moste schrewe /
That' feele I on my ribbes al by rewe [leaf 111, *for* 106]
And euere schal vnto my*n* endyng' day
But' in a bed he was so freissh and gay
And þer-wiþ-al so wel couþe he me glose /
Whan þat' he wolde han my bele chose /
þat' þough he hadde me bete on euery boon
he couþe wynne agayn my loue anon
I trowe I loued him þe bet' for he
Was of' his loue daungerous to me
We wy*mm*en han if' þat' I schal not' lye
In þis manere a queinte fantasye
Wayte what' þing we may nought' lightly haue
Ther-after wole we crye alday and c*rau*e /
fforbede vs þing' and þat' desyren we
Prees on vs faste and þanne wil we flee /
Wiþ daunger outen we alle oure chaffare
Gret' prees at' market' makeþ deere ware /
And to gret' cheep is holde / at' litel pris
This knoweþ eue*ry* wo*mm*an þat' is wys
My .v^e^ housbonde god his soule blesse
Which þat' I took' for loue and no richesse /
he som tyme was a clerk' of' Oxenforde
And hadde left' scole and wente at' hom to borde

Wiþ my gossybb dwellyng' in oure toun
God haue hire soule hir name was alisoun
Sche knew myn herte and al my priuyte /
Bettre þan oure parissche prest' so mote I þee /
To hire bywreyed I my counseil al
ffor hadde myn housbonde pyssed on a wal
Or don a þing' þat' schulde haue cost' his lyf'
To hire and to anoþer worþy wyf'
And to my neece which I loue wel
I wolde han told his counseil euerydel
And so I dede ful ofte god it' woot'
That' made his face often reed and hoot'
ffor verray schame and blamed himself' for he
hadde told to me so gret' a pryuyte [leaf 111, back]
And so it' felle þat' ones in a lente
So ofte tyme vnto my gossib wente /
ffor euer ȝit I loued to be gay
And for to walke in marchi aueril and may
ffrom hous to hous to herkne sondry tales
That' Iankyn clerk' and my gossibb dame alis
And I my self' in to þe feldes wente
myn housbond was at' londoñ al þat' lente
I hadde þe bettre leysir for to pleye
And for to see and eek' for to be seye
Of' lusty folk' what' wist' I wher my *grace*
Was schapen for to be or in what' place
þerfore made I my visitacioñs
To vigilies and to *processioñs*
To prechyng' eek' and to þis pilgrimages
To pleyes of' myracles and of' mariages
And wered vpon my gaye skarlet' gytes
This wormes ne þise moþþes ne þise mytes
vppon my *peril* frete hem neuer a del
And wostow why for þey were vsed wel
¶ Now wol I tellen forþ what' happed me
I seye þat' in þe feeldes walked we

Til trewely we hadde such dalyance
þis clerk' and I þat' of' my purueiaunce
I spak' to him and seyde how þat' he
If I were wydow schulde wedde me
ffor certeynly I seye for no bobaunce /
þat' was I neuer ȝit' wiþoute purueance
Of' mariage ne of' oþer þinges eeke
I holde a mouses witte nat' worþ a leek'
þat' haþ but' oon hole for to stirten to
And if' þat' faile þan is al y-do
[I bar him on honde / he had enchaunted me [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *No other Oxford MS has these lines.*—G. Parker.]
my dame taught̃e me / that subtilte
and eke I seide / I mette of him al night̃
he wolde haue shamed me / as I lay vpright̃
and al my bed was ful / of verry blood
but yit I hope / that ye shul do me good
for blood bitokeneth̃ gold / as me was taught̃e
and al was fals / for I dremed right̃ naught̃e
but as I folwed ay / my dames lore
als wel of that / as of other thinges more] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *extract stops*]
But' now sire lat' me see what' I schal seyn
A ha. by god I haue my tale agayn
Whan þat' my ferþe housbonde was on bere
I wepe algate and made sory chere [leaf 112, *for* 107]
As wyues mooten for it' is vsage /
And with my keu*er*cheeff' couered my visage
But' for þat' I was purueyed of' a make /
I weep but' smale and þat' I vndertake
To chirche was my*n* housbond y-born on morwe
With neghebours þat' for him made sorwe
And Iankyn oure clerk' was on of' þo
As help me god whan þat' I seih him go
After þe beere me þought̃' he hadde a paire
Of' legges and of' feet' so cleene and faire
That' al myn herte I yaf' vnto his holde
he was I trowe twenty wynt*er* olde

And I was fourty if I schal seye soþ
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes toþ
Gat toþed I was and þat bycam me wel
I hadde þe printe of seint venus sel
As help me god I was a lusty oon
And fair and riche and ȝong and wel bygon
And trewely as myn housbond tolde me
I hadde þe beste queynte þat/ mighte be
[for certis I am al fully Venerian
in feling / *and* myn herte is Marcian
Venus me yaff my lust / my likerousnes
and Mars yaff me / my sturdy hardynes]
Myn ascendent was Taur and Mars *þer*inne
Allas allas þat euer loue was synne /
I folwed ay myn inclinacioñ
By vertue of my constellacioñ ·
That made me I couþe not wiþdrawe
My chambre of venus from a good felawe
[yit haue I Mars is marke / vppon my face
and also in another prevy place
for god so wis be / my sauacio*un*
I loued neu*er*e / bi no discressio*un*
but eu*er*e folwed / myn appetite
al were he long / shorte / blak or white
I toke no kepe / so that he liked me
how pore he was / ne eke of what degre]
What schulde I seye but at þe monþes ende
This Ioly clerk Iankyn þat was so heende /
haþ wedded me with̄ gret solempnite
And to him ȝaf I al þe lond and fee /
That euere was me ȝiuen þer byfore
But afterward repentede me ful sore
he nolde suffre no þing of my lest
By god he smot me onys on þe lest
ffor þat I rente out of his book a leef
That of þat strook my eeren woxen deef [leaf 112, back]

[MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *Only this Oxf. MS has these lines. Barlow* 20 *omits ll.* 605-8 *too.*—G. P.]

[MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *Land* 600 *also has these lines,* 619—226, *but no other Oxford MS has them.*—G. P.]

¶ Stiborne I was as is a leonesse /
And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse /
And walke I wolde as I hadde don biforn
ffrom hous to hous al þough he hadde it sworn
ffor wiþ ful often tyme he wolde preche
And me olde romañce gestes teche
how he simplicius Gallus lefte his wijf
And hire forsook for terme of his lijf
Not but for openhede he hir say
Lokyng out at his dore on a day
Anoþer Romayn tolde he me by name
That for his wyf was at a Somer game /
Wiþoute his wytyng he forsook hire eeke
And þanne wolde he vpon his bible seeke
That ilke prouerbe of ecclesiaste
Wher he comañdeþ and forbedeþ faste
Man schal not suffre his wyf to roule aboute
þan wolde he seye right þus wiþouten doute
Who so þat buldeth his hous al of salwes *nota bene*
And prikeþ his blynde hors ouer þe falwes
And suffreþ his wijf go for to seeken halwes
Is worþy for to be hanged on þe galwes
But al for nought I sette nat an hawe
Of his prouerbes ne of his olde lawe
Ne I wolde not of him corrected be /
I hate him þat my vice telleþ me
And so don mo god woot of vs þan I
This made him with me wood al outerly
I nolde not forbere him in no caas
Now wil I seie ȝou soþ by seint Thomas
Why þat I rent out of his book a leef
ffor which he smot me þat I was deef
he hadde a book þat gladly night and day
ffor his disporte he wolde rede alway
he clepede valery and Theofraste
At which book he lowh alwey ful faste [leaf 113, *for* 108]

And eek' þer was som tyme a clerk' in Rome /
A Cardinal þat' highte seint' Ierome
That' made a book' azein Iouynian
In which book' eeke þer was Terculan
Crisippus Trocula and helowys
That' was abbesse nat' fer fro Parys
And eek' þe parables of' Salomon
Ovides art' and bokes many oon
And alle þise were bounde in oo volume
And euery night' and day was his custume
Whan he hadde leysyr and vacacioun
ffrom oþer worldly occupacioñ
To reden in þis book' of' wikked wyues
he knew of' hem mo legendes and lyues
Than ben of' goode wyues in þe bible /
ffor trusteþ wel it' is an impossible
That' ony clerk' wole speken good of' wyues
But' if' it' be of' holy seintes lyues
Ne of' non oþer wo*m*men neuer þe mo
Who peynted þe lyoun tel me who
By god if' wo*m*men hadden writen stories
As clerkes han wiþinne here oratories
They wolde haue writen of' men more wickednesse
Than alle þe marke of' ad*a*m may redresse
The children of' mercurie and venus
Ben in here werkynge contrarious
Mercurie loueþ wisdam and science /
And venus loueþ ryot' and dispence /
And for here diuerse disposicioñ
Eche falleþ in oþres exaltacioñ
As þus god wot' mercurie is desolat
In Piscis. where venus is exaltat'
And venus falleþ þer mercurie is reised
Ther-fore no wo*m*man of' no man is preysed
The clerk' whan he is olde and may not' do
To Venus werk' nought' worþ his olde scho [leaf 113, back]

Than sitte he doun and writ' in his dotage /
That' wommen con not' keepe here mariage
But' now to purpos why I tolde þe
That' I was beten for a book' pardee
Vppon a night' Iankyn þat' was oure syre
Redde on his book' as he sat' by þe fyre
Of' Eua first' þat' for hire wickednesse
Was al mankynde brought' to wrecchednesse
[for which Ihesu crist / him silff was sleyne [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 92, *back*]
that bought vs with his herte blood ageyne [*Laud MS* 739 *omits* 716–720.]
lo here expresse of recorde / may ye fynde
that woman was the loos / of al mankynde]
Tho redde he me how Sampson lost' his heris
Slepyng' his lemman kit' it' wiþ hir scheris
Thurgh which treson lost' he boþe his eyen
Tho redde he me if' þat' I schal not' lyen
Of' ercules and of' his deyanire /
That' caused him to sette himself' a fyre
No þing' for-gat' he þe penance and woo
That' Socrates hadde with his wyues tuo
how þat' ancipa caste pisse on his heed
This seely man sat' stille as he were deed
he wyped his heed no more durste he seyn
But' or þat' þundir stynte comeþ a reyn
Of' Phasipha þat' was þe queen of' Grete /
ffor schrewednesse him þought' þe tale swete
ffy spek' nomore it is a grisly þing'
Of' hire horrible lust' and hire likyng'
Of' Clitermistra for hire leccherie
That' falsly made hir housbonde for to dye
he redde it' wiþ wel good deuocion
he tolde me for what' occasion
Amphiorax at' Thebes lost' his lyf'
Myn housbond had a legend of' his wijf'
Eriphilem þat' for an ouche of' golde
haþ pryuyly vnto þe Grekes tolde

Wher þat' hir housbond hid him in a place
ffor which he hadde at' Thebes sory grace
Of' lyma tolde he me and of' lucye
They boþe made here housbondes for to dye [leaf 114, *for* 109]
That' on for loue þat' oþer was for hate
lyma hire housebonde on euen late
Enpoysoned hadde for sche was his foe
Lucia likerous loued hir housbonde so
That' for he scholde vppon hir alwey þinke
Sche yaf' him such a loue maner drynke
That' he was deed er it' was by þe morwe
And þus algates housbondes han sorwe
Than tolde he me how oon latumyus
Compleigned to his felaw arius
That' in his gardyn growed such a tree
On which he seyde þat' his wyues þre
hanged hemsclue for hertes dispitous
O leeue broþer quod þis arious
ȝif' me a plante of' þat' blisful tree
And in my gardyn planted schal it be/
Of' later date of' wyues haþ he redde
That' han slayne here housbondes in þe bedde
And leet' hir lecchour dight hir al þe night'
Whan þat' þe corps lay in þe floor vpright'
And some han dryuen nayles in here brayn
Whil þat' þey sleepe and þus þey han hem slayn
Some han ȝiuen poyson in here drynke
He spak' more harme þan herte may beþynke
And þer-wiþ-al he knew of' mo prouerbes
þan in þis worlde þer growen gresse or herbes ¶ Solo melius habitare
Bet' is *quod* he þin habitacioñ
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoñ
Than with a wo*m*man vsyng' for to chyde
Bet' is *quod* he heihe in þe roof' abyde
Than wiþ an angry wyf' doun in an hous
They ben so wicked and cont*r*arious

þey hateþ þat here housbondes loueþ ay
he seyde a wo*m*man cast hir schame away
Whan sche cast of hir smok and for þer*m*o
A fair wo*m*man but sche be chast also [leaf 114, back] 784
Is lyk a goldryng on a sowes nose
Who wolde wene or wolde suppose
þe woo þat in my*n* herte was and pyne
And whan I saugh he wolde neuer fyne 788
To reden on þis cursed book al night
Al sodeinly þre leues haue I plight
Out of his book right as he red and eeke
I with my fest so took him on þe cheeke 792
þat in oure fire he fille bakward adoun
And he vpstirte as doþ a wood leoun
And with his fest he smot me on þe heed
þat in þe floor I lay as I were deed 796
And whan he saugh how stille þat I lay
he was agast and wolde han fledde away
Til atte laste out of my swowe I brayde
O hast þou slayn me false þeef I sayde 800
And for my lond þus hastow moerdred me /
Or I be deed 3it wol I kisse þe
And neer he come and kneled faire adoun
And seyde deere suster alisou*n* 804
As help me god I schal þe neuer smyte
þat I haue doon it is þiself to wyte
fforgiue it me and þat I þe beseke /
And 3it eftsones I hitte him on þe cheeke / 808
And seyde þeef þus mochel am I wreke
Now wil I dye I may no lenger speke
But at þe laste / wiþ mochel care and woo
We felle acorded by vs seluen tuo 812
he 3af me al þe brydel in myn hond
To haue þe gou*er*nance of hous and lond
And of his tunge and of his hand also/
And made him brenne his book anon right þo 816

And whan þat I hadde geten vnto me
By maistrie al þe souerainte
þan he seyde myn owne trewe wyf' [leaf 114, back, at bottom of the page]
Do as þou list' þe terme of' alle þy lif' / [leaf 101 b, for 110]
kepe þin honour and keep eek' myn estate /
After þat' day we hadde neuer debate /
God help me so I was to him as kynde
As eny wijf' from Denmark' in to ynde
And al so trewe and so was he to me /
I pray to god þat' sitte in mageste
So blisse his soule for his mercy deere
Now wol I telle my tale if' ȝe wol heere

¶ Here endeþ þe prologe of' þe gode wif' of' Baþe

[*The Wrangle between the Summoner and Friar.*]

The frere lowh whan he haþ herd al þis
Now dame *quod* he so haue I ioye or blis
This is a long' preamble of' a tale
And whan þis somnour herde þe freere gale /
Lo *quod* þe somnour goddes armes tuo
A freere wille entremette him euermo
lo goode men a flye and eek' a freere
Wille falle in euery dissche and eek'/ matiere /
What' spekest' þou of' preambulacioñ
What' amble or trotte or pees or go sit' doun
Thou lettest/ oure disport' in þis manere /
ȝe woltow so þou sompnour *quod* þe ffrere /
Now by my fay I schal er þat' I go
Telle of' a Somnour such a tale or tuo
That' alle þe folk' schulle laughen in þis place
Now elles frere I beschrewe þy face
Quod þis somnour and I byschrewe me /
But' if' I telle þe tales tuo or þre
Of' freres or I come to Sydyngborne
þat' I schal make þin herte for to morne

ffor wel I wot þy pacience is gon
Oure hoste cryde pees and þat anon
And seyde lat þe womman telle hir tale /
Ye faren as folk þat dronken ben of ale
Do dame telle forþ youre tale and þat is beste
Al redy sire *quod* sche right as yow leste
[1If I have licens o]f þis worþi frere [1 *MS cut away. If* 101b, *bk*]
[1Yis dame telle] forþ þi tale I wol here

[[1] Here bigynneth] þe goode wyues tale of bathe [*on f 101, bk*]
[[1] *MS cut away.*]

IN olde dayes of þe king arthour
[O]f which þat britons speken gret honour
[A]ll was þis land fulfild of fayerie
[T]he elfe queen with hire ioly compaignie
[D]aunced wiþouten in many a greene meede
[T]his was þe olde opynioñ as I rede
[I speke of many] hundred 3eer ago
[But] now can noman see non elues moo
[For] þe grete charite and þe preyeres
[Of] lymytoures and oþre pouere freeres
[T]hat serchen euery land and euery streem
[A]s þikke as motes in þe sonne beem
Blissynge halles chambres boures
[C]itees burghes castels hihe toures
[T]hropes bernes schipenes dayeries
This makeþ þat þer ben no fayeries
ffor þer as wont to walke was an elf
Ther walkeþ now þe lymytour himself
In vndermeles and in morwenynges
And seiþ his matyns and his holy þinges
As he goþ in his lymytacioun
Wommen may go now saufly vp and doun
In euery busch or vnder euery tree
þer is non oþer Incubus but he
And he wol do hem but dishonour
And so felle it / þat þis king arthour
hadde in his hous a lusty bacheler
þat on a day cam rydyng fro ryuer

And happed alone as sche was born
he saugh a mayden walkyng him biforn
Of which mayde maugre hire heed
By verray force he refte hir maydenhed
ffor which oppressioñ was such clamour
And swich pursute vnto þe king artour [leaf 102, *for* 111]
That dampned was þis knight for to be deed
By cours of lawe and scholde haue lost his heed
Perauenture such was þe statute þo
But þat þe queene and oþer ladyes mo
So longe preyede þe king of grace /
Til he his lijf him graunted in þe place
And yaf him to þe queen al at hire wille
To cheese whether sche wolde him saue or spille
The queen þankeþ þe king with alle hire might
And after þis þus spak sche to þe knight
Whan þat sche seigh hir tyme on a day
þou stondest yet quod sche in such aray
þat of þi lijf yet hast þou no suerte
I graunte þe lijf if þou canst telle me
What þing is it/ þat wommen most desiren
Be war and keep þi neeke bon from yren
And if þou canst noght telle it me anon
3it/ wol I 3iue þe leue for to gon
A twelf monþe and a day to seeke and lere
An answere sufficant/ in þis matiere
And seurte wil I han or þat þou pace
Thy body for to yelden in þis place
Wo was þis knight and sorufully he sikeþ
But what he may not do al as him likeþ
And at þe laste he chese him for to wende /
And come a3ein right at þe yeres ende /
With swich answere as god wolde him purueye /
And takeþ his leue and wendeþ forþ his weye
he seekeþ euery hous and euery place /
Wher as he hopeþ for to fynde grace

GROUP D. § 2. WIFE'S TALE. Corpus MS.

To lerne what' þing' wommen louen most'
But' he now coupe arryuen in no coost'
Wher as he mighte fynde in þis matere /
Tuo creatures acordyng' in feere
Some seyden wommen loue best' richesse
Some seyde honour some seyden Iolynesse / [leaf 102, back]
Some riche array some seyden lust' a bedde /
And ofte time to be wydewe and wedde /
Some seyden þat' we be most' yesed
Whan þat' we ben y-flatered and y-plesed
he goþ ful neigh þe sope I wol nat' lye
A man schal wynne vs best' wiþ flaterie
And with attendaunce and wiþ besynesse
Ben we y-lymed boþe more and lesse /
And some men sein how þat' we louen best'
ffor to be fre and do right' as vs lest'
And þat' noman / repreue vs of' oure vice
But' seye þat' we be wyse and noþing' nyce
ffor trewely þer nys non of' vs alle /
If' eny wigħt' wol clawe vs on þe galle /
þat' we nyl loke or he seiþ vs soþ
Assay and he schal fynde it' þat' he doþ
ffor be we neuer so vicious wipinne
We wil be holden wys and clene of' synne
And some men sein þat' gret' delyt' haue we
ffor to be holden stable and ek' secre
And in oo purpos stedefastly to dwelle
And not' bewreye þing' þat' men vs telle
But þat' tale is not' worþ a rake stele
Parde we wommen konnen noþing' hele
Witnesse on Myda wil ȝe heere þe tale /
Ovide amonges oþer þinges smale
Setthe myda hadde vnder his longe heris
Growynge vp his heed two assis eeres
þe whiche vice he hidde as he best' migħt'
fful sotilly from euery mannes sight

þat saf his wijf þer wist of it no mo
he loued hire most and trusted to hire also
he preyde hire most þat vnto no creature
Sche scholde not tellen of his disfigure
Sche swor him nay for al þis world to wynne /
Sche wolde do þat vylanye or þat synne [leaf 103, for 112]
To make hire housbonde han so foul a name
ffor reproeuyng of him and foule schame
But naþeles hir þoughte þat sche dyde
That sche so longe scholde a counseil hyde
hir þought it sat so sore aboute hir herte
That needely som word hir most asterte
And sipþe sche dorste tellen it no man
Doun to a mareys faste sche ran
Til sche cam þer hir herte was a fyre
And as a bytore bumliþ in þe myre
Sche leyde hire mouþ vnto þe water doun
Bewreye me nought þou water with þy soun
Quod sche to þe I telle it and nomo
Myn housebonde haþ longe asses eeres tuo
Now is myn herte al hool now it is oute
I might no lenger kepe it out of doute
here may ȝe see þough we a tyme abyde
Yet out it moot we mowe no counseil hyde
The remenant of þe tale if ye wol heere
Redeþ Ovyde and ȝe may it leere
This knight of which my tale is specially
Whan þat he saugh he mighte nought come *þerby*
þis is to seye what wommen louen most
Wiþinne his herte sorwful was þe gost
But home he goþ he mighte nought soiourne
þe day was come þat homward most he tourne
And in his way it happed him to ryde
In alle his care vnder a forest syde
Wher he saugh on one daunce go
Of ladyes xxiiij. and ȝit mo

Toward þe daunce he drowe him yerne
In hope þat' som wisdam schulde he lerne
But' certeinly or he cam fully þere /
Vanysscheđ was þe daunce he nyste not where / 996
No creature saugh he þat bar lyf'
Saue in þe grene he saugh sittyng' a wijf' [leaf 108, back]
A foulere wigh̄t' þer may non deuyse
Agayn þe knight' þe olde wijf' gan arise 1000
And seyde sire knigh̄t' here forþ ne liþ no wey
Telle me what' þat' 3e seken by 3oure fey
Perauenture it may þe bettre be /
This olde folk' konne mochel þing' quod sche / 1004
my leeue mooder q*uod* þis knight' certeyn
I am but' ded but' if' þat' I can seyn
What' þing' it' is þat' wo*m*men most' desire
Cowde 3e me wisse I wolde wel quyte youre hyre 1008
Plight' me þi trouþe here in myn hand q*uod* sche
The nexte þing' þat' I require þe
Thou schalt' it' do if' it' lye in þy migh̄t'
And I wil telle it' 3ou or it be nigh̄t' 1012
haue here my trouþe q*uod* þe knigh̄t' I gr*a*unte
Than q*uod* sche I may me wel auaunte
Thy lyf' is sauf' for I wol stonde þer by
vpon my lijf' þe queen wole seye as I 1016
lat' se which is þe proudest' of' hem alle
That' wereþ on a kerchef' or a calle
þat' dar say nay of' þat' I schal 3ou teche
lat' vs go forþ wiþoute lenger speche 1020
Tho rowned sche a pystel in his eere
And bad him to be glad and haue no feere
Whan þey be comen to þe court' þis knigh̄t'
Seyde he hadde holde his day as he hadde hight' 1024
And redy was his answere as he sayde
fful many a noble wijf' and many a mayde
And many a wydowe for þat' þey ben wyse /
The queen hir seluen sittyng' as Iustyse 1028

Assembled ben his answer for to heere
And afterward þis knigħt' was bode appeere
And þat' þe knigħt' schal telle in audience
To euery wigħt' comanded was scilence
What' þing' þat' worldly wo*m*men louen meest'
This knigħt' ne stood nat' stille as doþ*a beest' [leaf 104, for 113]
But' to his questiõ anon answerde /
With manly vois þat' al þe court/ it herde
My liege lady gene*r*ally q*uod* he /
Wo*m*man desireþ to haue soueraynte
As wel ouer hir housbonde and hire loue
And for to be in maystrie him aboue
þis is ȝoure most' desyr þough ȝe me kille
Doþ as you list' I am heer at' your wille
In al þe court' ne was þer wijf' ne mayde
Ne wydewe þat' contraried þat' he sayde
But' seyden he was worþy han his lijf'
And wiþ þat word vp sterte þat' olde wijf'
Which þat' þe knigħt' saugh sittyng' on þe grene
Mercy q*uod* sche my souerayn lady queene/
Or þat' youre court' departe do me rigħt'
I taughte þis answere vnto þis knigħt'
ffor which he plighte me his treuþe þere
The firste þing' I wolde of' him requere
he wolde it' do if' it' lay in his migħt'
Byfore þe court' þan preye I þe sire knigħt'
Quod sche þat' þou me take vnto þi wijf'
ffor wel þou wost' þat' I haue kept' þy lijf'
If' I seye fals sey nay vpon þy fey
This knigħt' answerde allas and weylowey
I wot' rigħt' wel þat' such was my biheste /
ffor goddes loue chese a newe requeste/
Tak' al my good and lat' my body go
Nay þan q*uod* sche I schrewe vs boþe tuo
ffor þough þat' I be foule and olde and poure
I nolde for al þe metal ne for oure

þat vnder erþe is graue or liþ aboue
But if þat I þy wyf were and þi loue
My loue q*uod* he nay my dampnacioñ
Allas þat eny of my nacioñ
Scholde euere so foule y-disp*ar*aged be
But al for nought þe ende is þis þat he [leaf 104, back]
Constreyned was he nedes moste hire wedde
And takeþ þis olde wijf and goþ to bedde
Now wolden some men seyn p*er*auenture
That for my necgligence I do no cure
To telle ȝou þe Ioye and þe array
That at þe feste was þat ilke day
To which þing schortly answer*e* I schal
I seye þer was no ioye ne feste at al
þer nas but heuynesse and mochil sorwe
ffor priuely he wedded hire on a morwe
And al day after hidde him as an owle /
So wo was him his wijf loked so foule
Gret was þe sorwe þe knight hadde in his þought
Whan he was with his wyf a bedde brought
he walweþ and torneþ to and fro
his olde wijf lay smylyng eu*er*emo
And seide O dere housbonde o benedicite
ffareþ euery knight þus with his wijf as ȝe
Is þis þe lawe of king arthures hous
Is euery knight of his loue þus daungerous
I am ȝour owne loue and eek ȝoure wijf
I am sche which þat saued haþ ȝoure lijf
And certes ȝit dede I ȝou neuer vnright
Why fare ȝe þus wiþ me þe ferste night
ȝe faren like a man þat hadde lost his wit
ffy what is my gilt for godes loue tel it
And it schal ben amended if I may
Amended q*uod* þis knight nay nay
That wil nat ben amended neueremo
þou art so loþly and so olde also

And þer-to comen of so lowh a kynde
That litel wonder is þough I walwe & wynde
So wolde god myn herte wolde breste
Is þis quod sche þe cause of 3oure vnreste
3e certeinly quod he no wonder is
Now sire quod sche I coupe amende al þis [leaf 105, for 114
If þat me liste or it were dayes þre
So wel 3e mighte bere 3ou vnto me
¶ But for 3e speken of such gentilesse ¶ Nota bene de Nobilitat
As is descended out of alle richesse /
þat þerfore schulden 3e be gentil men
Such erregance nys nat worþ an hen
lo who þat most is vertuous alway
Preuy and aperte and most endeþ ay
To do þe gentil dedes þat he can
And take him for þe grettest gentil man
Crist wole we clayme of him oure gentilnesse
Nat of oure eldres for here olde richesse
ffor þough þey 3eue vs alle here heritage
ffor which we clayme to be of heigh parage
3et may þey not bequeþe for no þing
To non of vs here vertuous lyuyng
That made hem gentil men y-called be
And bad vs folwen hem in such degre
Wel can þe wise poete of fflorence
That highte dante speke in þis sentence
Lo in swich maner ryme is dauntes tale
fful seelde vp riseþ by his branches smale
Prowesse of man for god of his prowesse /
Wil þat of him we clayme oure gentilnesse
ffor of oure eldres may we noþing clayme
But temperel þing þat we may hurte and mayme
Ek euery wight wot þis as wel as I
If gentilesse were plaunted naturelly
Vnto a certein linage doun þe lyne
Pryue and aperte þanne wolde þey neuer fyne

To don of' gentilesse þe faire office
þey mighten do no vylanye ne vice
Tak' fyre and bere it' in þe derkest' hous
Bitwixe þis and þe mount' of' Caucasous 1140
And lat' men schette þe dores and go þenne
3et' wol þe fyr as faire lye and brenne [leaf 105, back]
As þough a þousand men might' it beholde
his office naturel ay wol it' holde / 1144
vp peril of' lyf' til þat' it dye /
here may 3e se wel how þat' genterie /
Is not' annexed to possessiõn
Siþþe folk' do nat' here operaciõn 1148
alwey as doþ þe fir lo in his kinde
ffor god it' wot' men may ful often fynde
A lordes sone do schame and vilanye
And he þat' wol haue pris of' his gentrie 1152
ffor he was boren of' a gentil hous
And hadde his eldres noble and vertuous
And nyl himselfen do no gentil dedes
Ne folwe his gentil ancestre þat' ded is 1156
he nys nat' gentil be he duk' or eerle
ffor vyleyns synful dedes make a cheerle
ffor gentilnesse nys but' reneute
Of' þin ancestres for here beaute 1160
Which is a strong' þing' for þi persone
The gentilesse comeþ fro god allone
Thanne comeþ oure verray gentilesse of' grace
It' was noþing' byqueþe vs wiþ oure place / 1164
þinkeþ how noble as seiþ valerius
Was þilke Tullius hostilius
That' out' of' pouert' ros to heigh noblesse
Redeþ Senec/ and redeþ eek Boesse / 1168
þer schulde 3e seen expres þat' it' no dredis
That' he is gentil þat' doþ gentil dedis
And þerfore deere housebonde I þus conclude
Al were it' þat' myn ancestres were rude 1172

3et' may þat' heye god and so hope I
Graunte me grace to lyue *ver*tuously
Thanne am I gentil whan þat' I begynne
To lyuen *ver*tuously and weyuen synne
And þer as ye of' pouert' me repreue
The hihe god on whom þat' we bileeue [leaf 106, *for* 115*a*]
In wilful pouert' chese to leese his lijf' Nota de paupertate
And certes eu*er*y man and mayde and wijf'
May vnderstonde ih*es*u heuen king'
Ne wolde not' chese a vicious lyuyng'
Glad pouert' is an honest' þing' certeyn
þis wille Senec/ and oþer clerkes sein
Who so þat' holt' him payed of' his pouert'
I holde him riche al hadde he nought' cert'
he þat' coueyteþ is a pouere wigħt'
ffor he wolde han þat' nys nat' in his migħt
But' he þat' nought' haþ ne coueyteþ to haue
Is riche al þoguħ men holde him but a knaue
Verray pouert' is synne *pro*prely
Iuuenal seiþ of' pouert' myrily
The poũere man whan he goþ by þe way
Bifore þe þeues he may synge and play
Pouert' is hatel good and as I gesse /
A ful gret' brynger out' of' busynesse
A gret' amender eek' of' Sapience
To him þat' lackeþ it in pacience
Pouert' is þis al þoguħ it' seme alenge
Possessioñ þat' no wigħt' wol chalenge
Pouert' ful often whan a man is lowe
Makeþ his god and eek' himself' to knowe
Pouert' a spectacle is as þinkeþ me
þurgh which he may his *ver*ray freendes se
And þerfore syn þat' I you nought' greue
Of' my pouerte nomore me repreue
Now sire of' eelde 3e reproeue me
And certes sire þoguħ non auctorite

Were in no book' / ȝe gentil of' honour
Seyn þat' men schulde an old wijf' do fauour
And clepe him fader for ȝour gentilnesse /
And auctours schal I fynden as I gesse / 1212
Now þer ȝe seyn þat' I am foul and olde
Than drede ȝou nought' to ben a cokewolde [leaf 106, back]
ffor filþe and helþe al so mote I þe
Ben grete wardeyns vpon chastite 1216
But' naþeles syn I knowe ȝoure delyt'
I schal fulfille your worldly appetyt'
Chees now *quod* sche on of' þese þinges tweye /
To han me foule and olde til þat' I deye 1220
And be to ȝow a trewe humble wijf'
And neuere ȝow displese in alle my lijf'
Or elles ȝe wol haue me ȝong' and fair
And take ȝour auenture of' þe repair 1224
That' schal come to your hous by cause of' me
Or in som oþer place wel may be
Now chees ȝour seluen wheþer þat' ȝou likeþ
þis knight' auysed him and sore sikeþ 1228
But' atte laste he seyde in þis manere
My lady and my loue and wijf' so deere
I putte me in ȝoure wise gouernañce
Cheseþ ȝour self' which may be most' plesance 1232
And most' honour to yow and me also
I do no force þe wheþer of' þe tuo
ffor as ȝou likeþ it sufficeþ me
þanne haue I gote of' ȝou maystrie *quod* sche 1236
Syn I may cheese and gouerne as me list'
ȝe certes wijf' *quod* he I holde it' for best'
kisse me *quod* sche we be no lenger wroþe /
ffor by my trouþe I wol be to yow boþe 1240
þis is to sein / to be boþe fair and good
I pray to god þat' I mote steruen wood
But' I to ȝou be also sad and trewe /
As euer was wijf' syn þat' þe world was newe 1244

And but' I be to morwe as fair' to seene
As eny lady emperice or queene /
þat' is bitwen þe est' and eek' þe weste /
Do wiþ my lijf' and deþ right' as ȝou leste 1248
Cast' vp þe curteyne loke how it is / [*bottom of leaf* 106]
And whanne þat' þe knight' sawh al þis [leaf 115 *b*]
That' sche so fair was and so ȝong' þerto
ffor ioye he hente hir in his armes tuo 1252
his herte baþed in a baþ of' blisse
A þousand tyme a rowe he gan hire kisse
And sche obeyed him in euery þing'
That' mighte doon him pleisance or likyng' 1256
And þus þey lyued vnto here lyues ende
In perfyt' ioye and ihesu crist' vs sende
housbondes meke ȝonge and freissche abedde
And grace to ouerlede hem þat' we wedde 1260
And eek' I pray to Ihesu schorte here lyues
That' wol not' be gouerned by here wyues
And olde and angry nyggardes of' dispence 1263
God send hem sone a verray pestilence ¶ Explicit

¶ Here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe ffrere /

¶ Incipit prologus ffratris

This worþy lymytour þis noble ffrere
he made alway lowrynge cheere
vpon þe somnour but for honeste
No vyleynes word as 3it spak he /
But atte laste he seyde vnto þe wijf
Dame goode god 3if 3ou right good lijf
3e han touched heer al so mote I þe
In scole matier gret difficulte
3e han seid mochel þing right wel I seye
But dame heere as we ryden by þe weye
Vs nedeþ nat to speken but of game
And late auctoritees a goddes name
To preching & to scole eek of clergie /
But if it like vnto þis companye
I wol 3ou of a somnour telle a game
Parde 3e may wel knowe by þe name
That of no somnour may no good be sayd
I pray þat non of 3ou be yuele payd
A somnour is a romere vp and doun
Wiþ amendement of fornicacioun
And is y-bete at euery townes ende [leaf 115, back]
Oure host þo spak a sire 3e scholde ben heende
And curteys as a man of 3our astat
In companye we wille no debat /
Telleþ 3oure tale and lateþ þe somnour be
Nay quod þe somnour lat him seye to me
What so him list whan it comþ to my lot
By god I schal him quiten euery grot
I schal him telle such a gret honour
It is to be a flateryng lymytour
And eek of ful many an oþer cryme
Which nedeþ nat/ rehersen at þis tyme
And his office I schal him telle y-wys
Oure host answerde pees nomore of þis
And afterward he seyde vnto þe frere /
Telle forþ 3oure tale my leue mayster deere

¶ Here bygynneth þe
Whilom þer was dwellyng' in Couentre ¶ ffreres tale
An erchedekne a man of' heih degre
That' boldely dide execucion
In punysschyng' of' fornicacioñ
Of' wichcraf' and eek' of' Bawderie
Of' diffamacioñ and auoutrie
Of' chirche reeues and of' testamentes
Of' contractes and of' lak' of' sacramentes
Of' vsure and Symonye also
But' certes lecchours dede he grettest' wo
They scholden syngen if' þey were hent
And smale tyþeres weren foule y-schent
If eny p*er*soñ wolde vpon hem pleyne
Ther might' astirte him no pecunial peyne
ffor smale tyþes and eek' for smal offrynge
he made þe poeple spitously to synge
ffor or þe bisschop caught' hem wiþ his hook'
They weren in þe Erchedeknes book'
And þanne hadde he þurgh his Iurdiction
Power to don on hem correction
he hadde a somnour redy to his hande [leaf 116]
A sleyere boy was non in engelande
ffor sotilly he hadde his especiaile
That' taughte him where þat' him mighte auayle
he coude spare of' lecchours on or tuo
To techen him to foure and twenty mo
ffor þough þis somnour wood were as an hare
To telle his harlottrie I wil not' spare

ffor we ben oute of' here correction
They han of' vs no Iuresdictiõ
We neuer schullen terme of' alle hire lyues
Petur so ben þe wo*m*men of' þe Styues
Quod þis Somno*ur* y-putt' out' of' oure cure
Pees with meschance and with mysauenture
Thus seyde oure host' and let' him telle his tale
Now telleþ forþ and late þe somno*ur* gale
Ne spareþ nought' myn oughne maister deere
This false þeef' þis somno*ur* *quod* þe ffrere /
hadde alwey bawdes redy to his hond
As eny hauke to lure in Engelond
That' telle him al þe secre þat' þey knewe
ffor here aqueintance was nat' come of' newe
þey weren his approwours priuely
he tok' himself' a gret' profyt þer*by*
his maister knew nat' alwey what' he wan
Wiþouten maundement' of' a lewed man
he coude somne on peyne of' cristes curs
And þey were ynly gladde to fille his purs
And made him grete festes atte nale
And right' as Iudas hadde purses smale
And was a þeef' right' swich a þeef' was he
his mayster hadde but' half' his dewete
he was if' I schal ȝiuen him his laude
A theef' and eek' a sompno*ur* and a baude
he hadde eek' wenches of' his retenue
That' whe þer þat' *sir* Roberd or *sir* huwe
Or Iohñ or Rauf' or who þat' it' were
That' lay by hem þat' tolde it in his eere
Thus was þe wenche and he of' oon assent'
And he wolde fecche a feyned maundement'
And somne hem to þe Chapitre boþe tuo
And pile þe man and late þe wenche go
þanne wolde he seye I schal freend for þy sake
Do strike þe out' of' oure lettres blake

[leaf 116, back]

þe þar nomore as in þis cas *tra*uayle
I am þi frend þer I þe may auayle
Certein he knew of' briberies mo
þan possible is to telle 3ou vnto
ffor in þis worlde is dogge for no bowe
That' knew an hurt' deer from an old bite kowe
Than þat' þis sompn*our* knew a sleigh lecchour
Or avouter or elles a p*ara*mour
And for þat' was þe fruyt' of' alle þe rent
Therfore on it' he sette al his entent
And so bifelle þat' ones on a day
This somnour euer waytyng' on his pray
Rode for to somne an old wijf' a ribibe
ffeynyng' a cause for he wolde bribe
And happede þat' he seigh byfore hym ryde /
A gay yoman vnder a forest' syde
A bowe he bar and arwes bright' and keene
he hadde vppon a courtepy of' grene /
An hatte vppon his heed wiþ frenges blake
Sire quod þis Sompn*our* hail and wel atake /
Welcome q*uo*d he and eu*er*y good felawe
Whider ridestow vnder þis greene schawe
Seyde þis 3eman wilt' þou fer to day
This somnour him answerde and seyde nay
here faste by q*uod* he is myn entente
To ryden for to reysen vp a rente /
It' longeþ to my lordes dewete
Art' þou þanne a baillif' 3e q*uo*d he
he dorste nou3t' for v*er*ray filþe and schame [leaf 117]
Seie þat' he was a somn*our* for þe name
Dep*ar*dieux q*uod* þis 3oman dere broþ*er*
þou art' a bailly and I am anoþ*er*
I am vnknowen as in þis cuntre
Of' þin aqueintance I wil preye þe
And eek' of' breþerhode if' þat' þou leste
I haue golde and siluer in my cheste

If þat þe happed come in-to oure schire
Al schal be þin right as þou wolt desyre
Graunt mercy quod þis somnour by my feiþ
Euerich in oþeres hond his trouþe leiþ
ffor to be swore broþer til þey deye
and wiþ þat word þey ryden forþ here weye
This somnour wiþ þat was so /
As ful of venym ben þis wary-angles
And euer enquiryng vpon euery þing
Broþer quod he wher is 3oure dwellyng
Anoþer day if I scholde 3ou seche
This 3oman him answerde in softe speche
Broþer quod he fer in þe Norþ cuntre
Wher as I hope som tyme I schal þe se
Or we departe I schal þe so wel wisse
That of myn hous schalt þou neuer misse /
Now broþer quod þis sompnour I 3ou pray
Teche me whil we ryden by þe way /
Syn þat 3e ben a baillyf as am I
Som subtilte telle me feiþfully
In myn office how þat I may most wynne
And spareþ not for conscience ne synne
But as my broþer tell me how do 3e
Now by my trouþe broþer deere seyde he
As I schal tellen þe a feiþful tale /
My wages ben ful streyte and smale /
My lord is hard to me and daungerous
And my office ful laborious
And þerfore by extorciouns I lyue [leaf 117, back]
ffor soþe I [take] al þat men wil me 3iue
Algate be sleigte or violence
ffrom 3eer to 3er I wynne al my dispence /
I can no bettre tellen feiþfully
Now certes quod þis sompnour so fare I
I spare not to take god it wot
But if it be to heuy or to hoot

What' I may gete in counseil p*ri*uely
No maner conscience of' þat' haue I
Ner myn extorcioñ I might' noȝt' lyuen
Of' swiche iapes wil I nat' be schriuen
Stomake ne fro conscience knowe I noon
I schrewe þese schriftefadres eueriehon
Wel be we mette by god and by seint' Iame
But' leeue bro*þer* telle me þanne þy name
Quod þis somno*ur* in þis mene while
This ȝeman gan a litel for to smyle
Bro*þer* q*uo*d he wiltow þat' I þe telle
I am a steue my dwellyng' is in helle
And heer I ryde aboute my purchasyng'
To wite wher men wil ȝif' me eny þing'
my purchace is to fette of' alle my rente
loke how þou rydest' for þe same entente
To wynne good þou rekkest' neuer how
Right' so fare I for ryde wolde I now
vnto þe worldes ende for a preye
A q*uo*d þis somnour bene*dicite* what' ȝe seye
I wende ȝe were a yoman trewely
ȝe han a mannes schappe as wel as I
han ȝe a figure þanne dete*r*minat'
In helle þer ȝe ben in ȝoure estat'
Nay certeinly quod he þer han we noon
But' whan vs likeþ we can take vs oon
Or elles make ȝou wene we ben schape
Som tyme [like] a man or like an ape /
Or lik' an aungel can I ryde or go [leaf 118]
It' is no wonder þing' þough it be so
A lousy iogulour can deceyue þe
And par de ȝit' can I more craft' þan he /
Why q*uo*d þis somnour ryde ȝe þanne or gon
In sondry schappe and nat' alwey in oon
ffor we quod he wille vs swich forme make
As most' able is oure prayes for to take

What' makeþ 3ou to han al þis labour
fful many a cause leeue sire somonour
Seyde þis feend but' al þing' haþ tyme
The day is schort' and it' is passed prime
And 3et' ne wan I no þing' in þis day
I wil entende to wynnyng' if' I may
And nat' entende oure wittes to declare
ffor broþer myn þi witte is al to bare
To vnderstonde þough I tolde hem þe
But' for þou axest' whi labouren we
ffor somtyme ben we goddes instrumentz
And menes to do his comaundementz
Whan þat' him list' vpon his creatures
In diuerse acte and in diuers figures
Wiþouten him we han no might' certayn
If' þat' him liste to stonden þer agayn
And som time at' oure praye han we leue
Only þe body and not' þe soule greeue /
Witnesse on Iob whom þat' we dyden wo
And som tyme han we might' of' boþe tuo
þis is to seyn of' soule and body eeke
And som tyme we ben suffred for to seeke
vpon a man and do his soule vnreste
Nat' his body and al is for þe beste
Whan he wiþstondeþ oure temptacioñ
It' is a cause of' his saluacioñ
Al be it' þat' it was not' oure entente
he schulde be sauf' but' þat' we wolde him hente
And som tyme be we seruantz vn-to man [leaf 118, back]
As þe erchebisschope seint' Dunstan
And to þe apostles seruant/ was I
3et' telleþ me quod þe somnour feiþfully
Make 3e 3ow newe bodyes þus alwey
Of' elementz þe feend answerde nay
Som tyme we feyne and som tyme we arise /
Wiþ dede bodyes in ful sondry wise

And speke as renabely and faire and wel
As to þe phitonessa dede Samuel /
And ȝit wol some men say it was nat he
I do no force of ȝoure diuinite
But o þing warne I þe I wil nat lape
Thou wilt algates wite how we be schape /
þou schalt her aftirward my broþer deere
Come wher þe needeþ nat of me to leere
ffor þou schalt by þin owne experience
Come in-to þe chayer rede þis sentence
Bet þan virgile whil he was a lyue
Or dante also now lat vs ryde blyue
ffor I wil holde company wiþ þe
Til it be so þat þou forsake me
Nay quod þis somnour þat schal nat betyde
I am a ȝeman knowe is ful wyde
my trouþe wil I holde to þe as in þis cas
ffor þey þou were þe deuyl Sathanas
My trouþe wil I holde to my broþer
As I am sworne and eche of vs to oþer
ffor to be trewe broþer in þis cas
And broþer we gon to oure purchas
Take þou þy part what men þe wole yiue
And I schal myn þus may we boþe lyue
And if þat eny of vs haue more þan oþer
lat him be trewe and parte it wiþ his broþer
I graunte quod þe deuyl by my fay
And wiþ þat word þey ryden forþ here way
And right at þentryng of þe tounes ende [leaf 119]
To which þe somnour schop him for to wende
They say a carte þat charged was with hey
Which þat a cartere drof forþ on his wey
Deep was þe wey for whiche þe carte strood
This cartere smot and striued as he were wood
hayt brok hayt scot what spare we for þe stones
The feend quoþ he ȝow fecche boþe body and bones /

As ferforþly as euere were ȝe foled
So moche woo as I haue for ȝou þoled
þe deuel haue al boþe hors and cart' and hey
þoughte þis somnour he schulle we haue a pley
And neer þe feend he drough as nought' ne were
fful priuely and rouned in his eere
herkne my broþer herkne by þy feiþ
herestow nat' how þe cartere seiþ
hente it' anone for he haþ ȝiuen þe
Boþe hey and carte and eek' his caples þre /
Nay *quod* þe deuyl god not' neuer a del
It' is not' his entente truste me wel
Aske him þiself' if' þou nat' trowest' me
Or elles stynte a while and þou schalt' se
This carter þakked his hors on þe croupe /
And þey bygonne to drawe and to stoupe /
hayt' now *quod* he þat' Ihesu crist' ȝou blisse
And alle his hondywerk' boþe more and lesse /
þat' was wel twight' myn owne lyard boy
I *pray* god saue þe and seinte Loy.
Now is my carte out/ of' þe slough *par* de
lo broþer *quod* þe feend what' tolde I þe /
here may ye see myn oughne deere broþer
The carle spak' o þing' but' he þought' anoþer
late vs go forþ abouten oure viage
here wynne I noþing' vpon cariage
Whan þat' þey comen somwhat out' of' þe toun
þis somnour to his broþer gan to roun
Broþer *quod* he here woneþ an old rebekke [leaf 119, back]
That' hadde almost' as leef' to leese hire necke
As for to ȝiue a peny of' hire good
I wil haue twelue pens þough þat' sche be wood
Or I wille sompne hire to oure office
And ȝit' god woot' of hire knowe I no vice
But' for þou canst' nat' as in þis contre
Wynne þi coste tak here ensample of/ me

This somnour clappeþ at' þe wydowes gate
Com out' he seyde þou olde viritrate
I trowe þou hast' som frere or prest' wiþ þe
Who clappeþ seyde þis wijf' benedicite
God saue ȝou sire what' is ȝour swete wille
I haue q*uod* he a somon*ur* of' þe here a bille
vp peyne of' cursyng' loke þat' þou be
To morwe biforn) oure erchedekenes kne
To answere to þe court' of' certein þinges
Now lord q*uod* sche crist ih*es*u heuen king*es*
So wisly helpe me as I ne may
I haue ben syk' and þat' ful many a day
I may nat' gon so fer q*uod* sche ne ryde
But' I be deed so prikeþ it' in my syde /
May I nat' axe a libel sire somon*our*
And answere þere by my pro*cutour*
To swich a þing' as men wolde appose me /
ȝis q*uod* þis somn*our* pay anon lat' se
Twelue pens to me and I wil þe aquite
I schal no pro*fyt'* haue þ*er*-by but' lite
My maister haþ þe pro*fyt*/ and nat' I
Come of' and late me ryden hastily
ȝeue me twelue [pens] I may no lenger tarye
twelue q*uod* sche lady seinte marie
So wisly help me out' of' care and synne
þis wyde world þough þat' I scholde it wynne
Ne haue I not' xij. pens wiþinne myn holde
ȝe knowen wel þat' I am pouer and olde
kyþe ȝoure almesse on me pouere wrecche [leaf 120]
Nay þanne q*uod* he þe foule feend me fecche
If' I þe excuse þough þou scholde be spilt'
Allas q*uod* sche god wot' I haue no gilt'
Pay me q*uod* he or by þe swete seint' anne
As I wol bere a-way by newe panne /
ffor dette which þou owest' me of' old
Whan þat' þou madest' þin housbond kukkewold

I preyde at' home for þy correctioñ
Thow lixt' *quod* sche by my sauacioñ
Ne was I neuer or now wydewe ne wijf'
Somoned vnto your court' in al my lijf
Ne neuer I nas but' of' my body trewe /
vnto þe deuel blake and rowe of' hewe
yeue I þy body and my panne
And whan þe deuyl herde hir curse so
vpon hir knees he seyde in þis manere
Now mabely myn owne mooder deere
It' is ȝour wille in ernest þat' ȝe seye
þe deuyl *quod* sche fette him or he deye /
And panne and al but' he wil him repente
Nay olde stot' þat' is not' my*n* entente
Quoþ þis somnou*r* for to repente me
ffor any þing' þat' I haue had of' þe
I wolde I hadde þy smok' and eu*e*ry cloþ
Now broþer q*uo*d þe deuyl be nat' wroþ
þy body and þis panne is my*n* by right'
þou schalt' wiþ me to helle yet' to nigħt'
Wher þou schalt' knowen of' oure priuete
More þan a mayster of' diuinite
And wiþ þat' word þis foule feend him hent
Body and soule he with þe deuyl went
Where þat' somnou*r*s han here heritage
And god þat made after his ymage
Mankynde saue and gyde vs alle and some
And leeue þis somnour good man to bycome
lordinges I couþe han told ȝou q*uod* þis frere [leaf 120, back]
hadde I had leysir for þis somnour heere
After þe tixte of' crist' poule and Iohñ
And of' oure oþer doctours many oon
Suche peynes þat' ȝoure hertes migħt' agrise
Al be it' so no tonge may deuyse /
þougħ þat *I* migħt' a þousand wynt*er* telle
þe peyne of' þilke cursed hous of' helle

But' for to kepe vs fro þat' cursed place
Wakeþ and prayeþ ihesu for his grace
So kepe vs fro þe temptour Sathanas
herkneþ þis word be war as in þis cas
þe leoun sitte in his awayte alway
To sle þe Innocent' if' þat' he may
Disposeþ ay 3our hertes to wiþstonde
þe feend þat' 3ou wolde make þralle and bonde
he may nat' tempten yow ouer your mig̃t'
ffor crist' wille be 3our champioñ and knig̃t'
And preyeþ þat' þis somnour him repente
Of' his mysdede or þat' þe feend him hente ¶ Explicit'

¶ Her endeþ þe ffrere his tale /

This Somnour in his styrop·heyhe stood [*on leaf* 120, *back*]
Vpon þis frere his herte was so wood
That' lik' an aspen leef' he quok' for Ire
lordynges q*uod* he but' o þing' I desire /
I ȝou beseche þat' of' ȝour curtesye
Siþ ȝe han herde þis false frere lye
As suffreþ me I may a tale telle
This frere bosteþ þat' he knoweþ helle/
And god wot' þat' it' is litel wonder
ffreres and feendes ben but litel asonder
ffor parde ȝe han. ofte tyme herd telle/
how þat' a frere rauyssched was in helle
In spirit' ones by avisio*un*
And as an aungel ladde him vp and do*un*
To schewen him þe peynes þat' þer were.
In alle þe place saugh̄ he nat' a ffrere [leaf 121]
Of' oþer folk' he saugh̄ ynowe in woo
Vnto þis aungel spak' þe frere þo
Now sire q*uod* he han freres such a grace /
That' non of' hem schal come to þis place /
ȝis quod þis aungel many a milio*un*
And vnto Sathanas he hadde him doun
And now haþ Sathanas saiþ he a taile
Bradder þan of' þe Caryk' is þe saile
hold vp þi tayl þou Satanas q*uod* he /
Schew forþ þin ersand lat þe frere se /
Wher is þe neste of' ffreres in þis place
And er þat' half' a forlong' wey of' space

Right' so as bees swermen out' of' an hyue
Out' of' þe deueles ers þey gon to dryue
Twenty þousand freres on a route
And þoughte helle swarme al aboute
And camen a3ein as faste as þey mighte gon)
And in his ers þey crepeden euerichon)
he clapte his tayl a3ein and lay stille
This frere whan he loked hadde his fille
vppon þis tormentes of' þis sory place /
his spirit' god restored of' his grace /
Vnto his body a3ein and he awok'
But' naþeles for feere 3it' he quok'
So was þe deueles ars ay in his mynde
þat' is his heritage of' verray kinde
God saue 3ow alle saue þis cursed frere /
My prologe wol I ende in þis manere /

¶ Here begynneþ þe Somnours tale

LOrdynges þer is in yorkᵗ schire / as I gesse
A mersshy countre called Holdernesse
In which þer wente a lymytour aboute /
To preche and eekᵗ to begge itᵗ is no doute
And so bifelle þatᵗ on a day þis frere
Hadde preched atte cherche in þis manere
And specially abouen euery þingᵗ [leaf 121, back]
Excited he þe poeple in his preachingᵗ
To trentales and for goddes sake
Ther-with men mighten holy houses make
Ther as diuin seruice is honoured
Noughtᵗ þer as itᵗ is wasted and deuoured
Ne þer itᵗ nedeþ notᵗ for to be ȝiue
As to possessioners þatᵗ may elles lyue
þanked be god in wele and habundañce
Trentales seyde he deliuereþ fro penañce
here frendes soules as wel olde as ȝonge
Ifᵗ þatᵗ þey ben hastily y-songe
Noughtᵗ for to holde a prestᵗ ioly and gay
he syngeþ notᵗ but o messe in a day
Delyuereþ outᵗ quod he anon þe soules
fful hard it is wiþ fleisshookᵗ oþer with oules
Now speed ȝou hastely for cristes sake
to kepe ȝou fro peynes ofᵗ feendes blake
And whan þe frere hadde seyde al his entente
Wiþ Qui cum patre forþ he wente
Whan folkᵗ in chirche hadde ȝiue him what hem leste
he wente his way no lenger wolde he reste

Wiþ scrippe and tipped staf' tukked ful hye
In euery hous he gan to pore and prye
And beggeþ mele or chese or elles corn
his felaw had a staf' typped with horn
A payre of' tabeles of' yuory
And a poyntel polisshed fetously
And wrot' þe names alwey as he stood
Of' any folk' þat' 3af' hem eny good
Ascance þat' he wolde for hem preye
3iue vs a busshel whete malt/ or reye
A goddes kechil or a trippe of' chese
Oþer elles what 3ow list' we may nat cheese
A goddes halpeny oþer a masse peny
Oþer 3iue vs of' 3our bran if' 3e haue eny
A dagoun of' 3our blanket' leeue dame [leaf 122]
Oure suster deere here I write 3oure name
Bacon or beef' or such þing' as 3e fynde
A sturdy harlot' wente hem ay behynde
That' was here hostes man and bar a sakke
And what' men 3af' hem leyde it on his bakke
And whan he was out' at' þe dore anoon
he planed awey þe names eu*er*ychoon
That' he bifore hadde writen in his tables
he s*er*ued hem with nyfles and with fables
Nay þer þou lixt' þou somnou*r* q*uod* þe frere /
Pees quod oure host' for cristes moder deere
Telle forþ þi tale spare it not' at' al
So þryue I q*uod* þis somnou*r* so I schal
So longe he wente hous by hous q*uod* he
Til he come to an hous þer he was wont' to be
Refresshed more þan in an .C. places
Seke lay þe bonde man whos þe place is
And vpon a kowche lowe he lay
Deus hic' q*uod* he / O Thomas frend good day
Seyde þis frere curteysly and softe
Thomas sayde he god 3elde 3ow ful ofte

haue I vpon þis benche faren wel
heere haue I eten many a mery meel
And fro þe benche he drof' awey þe cat
And leyde doun his potent' and his hat
And eek' his scrippe and sette him softe a doun)
his felawe was go walked in þe toun
fforþ with his knaue in-to þat' ostelrie
Wher as he schop him þilke night' to lye
O deere maister q*uod* þis seeke man)
how han ȝe fare sipenes þat' marche bigan
I say ȝow' nought' þis fourtenight' and more
God woot' q*uod* he laboured haue I ful sore
And specially for þy Saluacioñ
haue I seyde many a p*re*cious orisoñ
And for oure o*þer* frendes god hem blesse [leaf 122, back]
I haue to day don at' ȝoure chirche a messe
A sayd a *ser*moñ after my simple wit'
nought' alle aft*er* þe text' of' holy writ'
ffor it is hard to ȝou as I suppose
þerfore wol I teche to ȝou al þe glose
Glosyng' is a glorious þing' certein
ffor lettre sleeþ so as clerkes sein
þer haue I taught' hem to be charitable
And spende here good þer it' is resonable
There I sawh oure dame a wher is sche
yonde in þe yerde I trowe þat' sche be /
Seyde þis man and sche wil come anon)
Ey mayster welcome be ȝe by seint/ Iohñ
Seyde þis wijf' how fare ȝe hertely
þe frere ariseþ vp ful curteisly
And hir enbrased in his armes narwe
And kisseþ hir swete and chirkeþ as a sparwe
Wiþ his lippes dame q*uod* he right' wel
As he þat is your *ser*uant' eueridel
I-þanked be god þat' ȝou ȝaf' soule and lyf'
ȝit/ sawh I not' to day so fair a wijf'

In al þe chirche god so saue me
3e god amende defautes *sir quod* sche
Algates welcome be 3e by my fey
Gramercy dame þis haue I founde alwey
But' of' 3our grete goodnes by 3our leeue
I wolde pray 3ou þat' 3e nought' 3ou greue
I wole with Thom*as* speken a litel þrowe
þese curates ben ful' necligent/ and slowe
To grope tendrely a conscience
In schrifte and in p*re*ching' is my diligence
And studye in petres wordes and in poules
I walke and fisshe mennes soules
To 3elde ih*es*u crist/ his p*ro*pre rente
To sprede his wordes is sette al myn entente
¶ Now by 3our leeue o deere sire *quod* sche [leaf 123]
Chydeþ him wel for god in trinite
he is as angry as a pissemire
þey þat' he haue al þat' he can desire
þey I him wrye a nigh̃t' and make him warm
And ouer him leye my legg' or arm
he groyneþ lik' oure boor gronyng' in sty
Oþer desport' of' him right' non haue I
I may not' plesen him in no maner caas
¶ Ieo v*ous* dy trescher & bien amy O Thom*as*
This makeþ þe feende þis mot' ben amended
Ire is a þing' þat' heye god defended
And þer-of' wol I speke a word or tuo
Now maister *quod* þe wijf' or þat' I go
What' wol 3e dyne I wole go *þer* aboute
Now dame *quod* he Ieo v*ous* dye sanz doute
haue I not' of' a Capoñ but' þe lyuere'
And of' 3our softe brede but' a schyuere
And after þat' a rosted pigges heed
But' þat' I wolde for me no beeste were deed
þanne hadde I wiþ 3ou holly suffisañce
I am a man of' litel sustenance /

My spirit' is fostred in þe bible
þe body is ay so redy and penyble
To wake þat' my stomak' is destroyed
I pray 3ou dame þat' 3e be nought' anoyed
þey I so frendly my counseil to 3ou schewe
By god I wolde not' telle it/ but' a fewe
Now sire *quod* sche but' oo word or I go
my child is deed wiþinne þise wikes two
Siþþen þat' 3e wente out of' þis toun
his deþ saugh I by reuelacioñ
Seiþ þis frere at home in oure dortour
I dar wel seyn þat/ er þat' half' an hour
after his deþ I sawh him born to blisse
In my*n* avisioñ so god me wisse
So dede our sextein and oure fermorer [leaf 123, back]
That' han ben trewe freres. fyfty 3eer
They may now god by þanke of' his lone
maken here Iubile and walken allone
And vp I ros and alle oure couent' eeke
With many a teere trillyng' on my cheeke
Wiþouten noyse or clateryng' of' bellis
Te de*um* was oure song' and no þing' elles
Saue þat' to crist' I seyde an orisoñ
Thankyng' him of' his reuelacioñ
ffor sire and dame trusteþ me right' wel
Oure orisons ben more spirituel
And more we se of' cristes secre þinges
Than burel folk' [though they were kynges [Harl. 1758, *leaf* 109]
We lyue in pouerte & in abstynence.
And boreH folke] in richesse and wynnynges[1] [1 in dispence. *Harl.* 1758]
Of' mete and drynk' and in here foul delit/
We han þis worldes lust' al in despit'
Lazar and Diues liueden dyuersely
And dyuerse guerdoñ hadde þey þer*by*
Who-so wol preye he moot' faste and be clene
And fatte his soule and make his cheekes lene

We fare as seiþ þapostil cloþ and foode
Sufficeþ vs þey3 þey ben not' goode
The clennes and þe fastyng' of' ous ffreres
makeþ þat' crist' acceptеþ oure prayeres
lo moyses .xl. dayes and .xl. nyght'
ffasted or þat' þe heihe god of' might
Spak' wiþ him in þe mount' of' Synay
With empty wombe fastyng' many a day
Receyued he þe lawe þat' was writen
Wiþ goddes fynger and helthe wel 3e witen
In þe moñt or elles er he hadde eny speche
With heyhe god þat' is oure lyues leche
he fasted longe and was in contemplañce
And aaron þat' hadde þe temple of' god in gouernañce
And eek' þat' oþer prestes euerichon
In-to þe temple whan þey scholden gon
To praye for þe poeple and do seruise [leaf 124]
They nolden drynken in no maner wise/
No drynk' þe which hem mighte drunke make
But' euere in abstynence to preye and wake
lest' þat' þey deyede tak' heede what' I seye
But' þey ben sobre þat' for þe poeple preye
Ware þat' I say no more for it' suffiseþ
Oure lord ihesus / as holy god deuyseþ
3iueþ ous ensample of' fastyng' and prayeres
Therfore we mendinañtz we pouere freres
Ben wedded to pouert' and to continence
To charite humblesse and also pacience
To persecucioñ for rightwisnesse /
To wepyng' misericorde and clennesse
And þerfore may 3e see þat' oure prayeres
I speke of' vs we mendenañte ffreres
Ben to þe hihe god more acceptable
Than 3oures wiþ 3oure feste at' þe table
ffro paradys first' if' I schal nought' lye
Was man out' chaced for his glotonye

And chast' was man in *par*adys certayn
But' herkne þere what' I schal ȝou sayn
I haue no text' of' þat' as I suppose
But' I schal fynde it in a maner glose
That' specially oure swete lord Ihesus
Spak' þus by vers whan he seyde þus
Blessed ben þey þat' pore in spirit/ ben
And so forþ al þe gospel may ȝe seen
Wher it' be like oure *pro*fessiõ
Or hem þat' swymmen in possessiõ
ffy on here pompe and on here glotonye
And for here lewednesse I hem diffye
Me þinkeþ þey ben like Iouinian)
ffatte as a whale and walking' as a swan)
As vynolent' as botel in þe spence
here prayer is ful of' gret' reuerence
Whan þey for soules sein þe psalme of' dauid [leaf 124, back]
lo buff' þey sain cor meu*m* eructauit'
Who folweþ cristes gospel and his lore
But' we þat' humble be and chaste and pore
Werkers of' goddes word and eek' auditoures /
þerfore right' as an hauke ryse at' a sou*rs*
vp springeþ vnto þe ayre right' so pr*a*yeres
Of' charitable and chaste besy freres
maken here sou*rs* to goddes eeren and who
Thom*as* þ*er*fore so mote I ride or go
And by þat' god þat' cleped is seint' yue
Nere þou oure bro*þer* schuldest' þou not' þriue
In oure chapitre praye we day and night'
To crist' þat' he sende þe hele and might'
Thy body for to welden hastily
God wot' *quod* he noþing' þ*er*-of' wot' I
As helpe me crist' as in fewe ȝeeres
haue I spended vpon diu*ers* maner freres
fful many a pound ȝit' fare I neuer þe bett'
Certein my good haue I almost' bisett'

ffar wel my golde for it' is al a-go
The ffrere answerde o Thomas why dost' þou so
What' needeþ 3ou diuerse freres to seche
What' needeþ him þat' haþ a parfit' leche
To sechen oþer leches in þe toun
3our inconstance is 3our confusioun
holde 3e þen me or elles oure couent
To preye for 3ou ben insufficient'
Thomas þat' Iape is not' worþ a myte
3oure maladye is for 3e han 3iuen vs so lite
A 3if' þat' couent' half' a quarter otes
A 3iue hem' one or tuo grotes
A 3iue þe frere a peny and let' him go
Nay nay Thomas it' may no þing' be so
What' is a ferþing' worþ parted in twelue
lo eche þing' þat' is oned by himselue
Is more straunge þen when it' is skatered [leaf 125]
Thomas of' me þou schalt' nat be flatered
þou woldest' oure labour haue for nought'
The hihe god þat' al þis world haþ wrought'
Seiþ þat' þe werkman is worþi his hyre
Thomas nought' of' 3our tresore I desire
As for my self' but' þat' alle oure couent
To pray for 3ou is ay so diligent'
And for to bulden cristes oughne chirche
Thomas if' 3e wol lerne for to wirche
Of' buldyng' vp of' chirches may 3e fynde
If' it' be good in Thomas lijf' of' Inde
3e ligge heer ful of' anger and of' Ire
With þe which þe deuyl sette 3oure ers a fyre
And chyden heere þis sely Innocent'
3oure wijf' þat' is so meeke and pacient'
And þerfore Thomas trowe me if' 3ou list'
Ne stryue not' wiþ þy wijf' al for þe beste
And bere þis word awey now by þy feith
Touchinge such þing' lo what' þe wise man seiþ

Wiþinne þin hous ne be þou no leoun
To þy subiectis do non oppressioun
Ne make þin acqueintance not for to fle
And Thomas 3it eft sones say I þe
Be war for hire þat in þy bosom slepeþ
Be war of þe serpent þat so slyly crepeþ
vnder þe grasse þat stingeþ subtilly
Be war my sone and herkene paciently
That xx^ti^ þousand men han lost here lyues /
ffor þat þei han ben spitous to here wyues
Now sip 3e han so holy and so meeke a wijf
What needeþ 3ou Thomas to make strif
þer is y-wys no serpent so cruel
Whan men trede on his tail ne half so fel
As womman is whan sche haþ caught an Ire
Vengance is þanne al þat þey desyre
Ire is a synne on of þe grete of seuene [leaf 125, back]
Abhominable vnto þe god of heuene
And to himself it is destruction
þis euery lewed vicary or parson
Can say how Ire engendreþ homicide
Ire in soþ is executor of pryde
I couþe of Ire seye so mochil sorwe
My tale scholde laste til to morwe
And þerfore I praye god boþe day and night
An Irous man sende him litel might
It is gret harm and certes gret pite
To sette an Irous man in heih degre
¶ Whilom þer was an Irous potestat
As seiþ Senek durynge his estat
Vpon a day out riden knightes tuo
And as fortune wolde it were so
That oon of hem cam home þat oþer nought
Anon þe knight bifore þe Iuge is brought
And seyde þus þou hast þy felaw slayn
ffor which I deme þe to deþ certain

And to anoþer knight comaunded he
Go lede him to þe deþ I charge þe
And happed as þey wente by þe weye
Toward þe place þer as he schulde deye
The knight cam which þey wend hadde be deed
Thenne þoughten þey it were þe beste reed
To lede hem boþe to þe Iuge aȝein
þey seyden lord þe knight ne haþ not sleyn
his felawe here he stant on lyue
ȝe schulle be deed *quod* he so mot I þriue
þis is to say boþe oon and tuo and þre
And to þe firste knight right þus spak he
I dampned þe þou most algate be deed
And þou also most needes lese þin heed
ffor þou art cause why þy felaw deyþ
And to þe þridde knight right þus he seiþ
Thou hast not don þat I comaunded þe
And þus he dede do slee hem alle þre
Irous kambises was eek drunkelewe
And ay delited him to ben a schrewe
And so bifelle a lord of his meigne
That loued *ver*tuous moralite
Sayde on a day vnto himself right þus
A lord is lost if he be vicious
And drunkenesse is eek a foul record
Of any man and namly in a lord
Ther is ful many an ey and many an eere
Awaytyng on a lord and he not where
ffor goddes loue drynkeþ more attem*per*elly
Wyn makeþ a man to lese wrecchedly
his mynde and eek his lymes eu*er*ychon
The reuers schalt þou see *quod* he anoon
And proue it by þin owne exp*er*ience
That wyn doþ to folk no such offence
Ther is no wyn byreueþ me my might
Of hande ne foot ne of myn eyȝen sight

[leaf 126]

And for despite he dranke ful moche more
An hundred part' þan he had don bifore
And right' anon þis cursede wrecche
lete þis knightes sone biforn him fecche
And commaundyng' hem þey schulde biforn him stonde
And sodeinly he took' his bowe on honde
And vp þe streng' he pulled to his eere
And wiþ an arwe he slough þe child right' þere
Now wheþer haue I a siker hond or non
Quoþ he is al my might' and my witte agon
haþ wyn byreued me myn yhe sight'
What' schulde I telle þe answere of' þe knight
his sone was slayn þer is namore to say
Beþ war þerfore wiþ lordes how ȝe play
Syngeþ placebo and I schal if' I can
But' if' it' be vnto a pouere man
To a pouere man men scholde his vices telle / [leaf 126, back]
But' not' to a lord þei he schulde go te helle /
Lo Irrous Sirus þilke Percien
how he destroyed þe ryuer of' Gysen)
ffor þat' an hors of' his was dreynt' þerinne
Whan þat' he wente Babilon) to wynne
he made þat' þe ryuer was so smal
That' wommen mighten waden oueral
lo what' seyde he þat' so wel teche can)
Ne he no felawe to an yrous man
Ne wiþ no wood man walke by þe way
leste þe repente I wol nomore say
Now Thomas leeue broþer leue þin Ire
Thou schalt' me fynde as iuste as is a squire
holde nought' þe deueles knyf' ay at' þin herte /
Thin anger doþ þe al to sore smerte
But schewe to me alle þy confessiō
Nay quod þis seeke man by seint' Symoñ
I haue ben schriuen þis day at' my curate
I haue him tolde al holly myn estate

It' needeþ nomore speke of' it sayde he
But' if' me luste of' myn humilite
3iue me þenne of' þy gold to make oure cloystre
Quod he for many a muscle and many an oystre
haþ ben our foode oure cloystre for to reyse
Whan oþer men han ben ful wel at' eyse
And 3it' god wot' vnneþes þe foundement
Parformed is ne of' oure pauyment'
Nis nought' a tile 3it' wiþinne oure wones
By god we owen fourty pound for stoones /
Now helpe thomas for him þat' harwed helle
Or elles moote we oure bokes selle
And if' we lacke oure predicacioñ
þanne goþ þe world al to destruccioñ
ffor whos wolde fro þis world vs byreue
So god me saue Thomas by 3oure leeue
he wolde byreue out' of' þe world þe sonne / [leaf 127]
ffor who can teche and werchen as we konne
And þat' is not' of' litel time quod he
But' sethyns Elye was or Elyze
han freres ben þat' fynde I of' record
In charite I-þanked be oure lord
Now Thomas help for seinte charite
A-doun anon he sette him on his kne
This sike man wex wel neigh wood for Ire
he wolde þat' þe frere hadde ben a fuyre
With his fals dissimilacioñ
Such þing' as is her in my possessioñ
Quod he þat' I may 3iue and non oþer
3e sein me þus / þat' I am 3our broþer
3e certes quod þe ffrere trusteþ me wel
I took' oure dame oure lettres wiþ oure seel
¶ Now wel quod he and somwhat' schal I 3iue
vnto 3our holy couent' whil I lyue
And in þin hand þou schalt' it' han anon
vp þis condicioñ and oþer non

þat' þou depart' it' so myn owne deere broþer
That' euery frere haue as moche as oþer
þis schalt' þou swere on þy profession
Wiþouten fraude or cauellacion 2136
I swere it' quod þis frere vpon my feiþ
And þer wiþal his hond in his he leiþ
lo heer my feiþ in me schal be no lacke
þan putte þin hond doun by my bakke 2140
Sayde þis man and grope wel byhynde
Bynepe my buttok' þere schalt' þou fynde
A þing' þat' I haue hidde in priuete
A þought' þis frere þat' schal go wiþ me 2144
And doun his hande he launceþ vnto þe clifte
he hopede þere for to fynden a ȝifte
And þanne ful besy was þis frere
Abouten his tuwel gropyng' here and þere 2148
¶ Amydde his hand he leet' þe frere a fart' [leaf 127, back]
Ther is no capel drawyng' in þe cart'
þat' might' haue lete a fart' of' such a soun
þe frere vp sterte as it' were a fers leoun 2152
A false cherl quod he for cokkes bones
This hast' þou for despite doon for þe nones
þou schalt' abeye þi farte if' þat I may
his meigne which þat' herden þis affray 2156
Cam lepynge in and chased out' þe ffrere
And forþ he goþ wiþ a ful angry cheere
And fette his felawe þer as lay his store
he loked as it' were a wilde boor 2160
he grynded his teeþ so was he wroþ
A stourdy paas doun to þe court' he goþ
Wher as þer woned a man of' gret' honour
To whom þat' he was alwey confessour 2164
This worþy man was lord of' þat' village
þis frere cam as þough it were in a rage
Wher as þis lord sat' etyng' at' his bord
vnneþes might' þe frere speke a word 2168

Til atte laste he seyde god 3ou se
þis lord gan loke and seyde benedicite
Quod he frere Iohñ what maner world is þis
I see wel þat' som þing' is amys
3e loken as þe woode were ful of' þeeues
Sit' doun anon and telle me what' 3our greef' is
And it' schal ben amended if' þat' I may
I haue q*uod* he had a despit' to day
God 3elde 3ou a-do*un* in 3oure village
þat' in þis world is non so pore a page
þat' he nolde han abhominacioñ
Of' þat' I haue receyued in þis toun
And 3it' me greueþ no þing' so sore
As þat' þis olde cherl wiþ lokkes hore
Blasphemed haþ oure holy couent' eeke
Now maister q*uod* þis lord I 3ou beseke
No maister q*uod* he but' a s*er*uitour [leaf 128]
þey I haue had in scole þat' hono*ur*
God likeþ nou3t' þat' men vs Raby calle
neiþer in market' ne in 3our halle
No force q*uod* he but' telle me of 3our greef'
sire q*uod* þis frere an ydious meschef'
This day betidde is to my*n* ordre and to me
And so p*ar* consequ*ens* to eche degre
Of' holy chirche god amende it' sone
Sire q*uod* þe lord 3e wot' what' is to doone
Distempre 3ou nought' 3e be my confessour
3e ben þe salt/ of' þerþe and þe sauour
ffor goddes loue 3oure pacience 3e holde
Telleþ me 3our greef' and he anon him tolde
As 3e han herd byfore 3e wot' wel what'
The lady of' þe hous ay stille sat'
Til sche hadde herde what' þe frere sayde
Ey goddes moder q*uod* sche blisful mayde
Is þer nou3t' elles telleþ me feiþfully
¶ madame q*uod* he how þenke 3ou þ*er*by

how þat' me þenkeþ *quod* sche so god me spede
I say a cherl haþ don a cherles deede
what' schulde I say god let' him neuer þe
his seeke heed is ful of' vanite
I holde him in a maner frenesye
Madame *quod* he by god I schal not' lye
but' I on oþer wise may ben awreke
I schal sclaundre him ou*er*al wher I speke
The false blasphemo*ur* þat' charged me
To parte þat' might' nou3t' departed be
To euery man y-liche wiþ meschau*n*ce
þe lord sat' stille as he lay in a traunse
And in his herte he rolled vp and do*un*
how hadde þis cherl ymaginacio*un*
To schewe such a probleme to þe frere
Neuer erst' er now herde I of' such matere
I trowe þe deuyl putte it' in his mynde [leaf 128, back]
In ars metrik' schal þer no man fynde
Biforn þis day of' such a questioñ
Who schulde make a demonstracioñ
þat' euery man schulde haue y-lik' his part'
Of' a so*un* or of' a sauour of' a fart'
O nyce proude cherle I schrewe his face
lo sires *quod* þe lord wiþ harde *grace*
Who herde euer of' such a þing' er now /
To eu*er*y man ylike telle me how
It' is a impossible it' may not' be
O nyce cherle god let' him neuer þe
þe rublyng' of' a fart' and euery soun
Nys but' of' eyre reuellacio*un*
And þer-wiþ wasteþ litel and litel away
þer is no man can deme by my fay
If' þat' it/ were departed equaly
What' lo my cherle lo 3it' how schrewedely
vnto my confesso*ur* to day he spak'
I holde him certein a demoniak'

Now eteþ 3oure mete and leteþ him go pleye
lete him go hange himself' a deuelweye

[*The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire. No break in the MS.*]

Now stood þe lordes squier at' þe bord
þat' karf' here mete and herde word for word
Of' alle þing' of' which I haue 3ou sayd
my lord *quod* he beþ not' yuele payd
I couþe telle for a gowne cloþ
To 3ou sir frere so 3e ben nat' wroþ
how þat' þis fart' scholde euene deled be
Among' 3our couent/ if' it like me
Telle on *quod* þe lord and þou schalt' haue anon
A gowne cloþ by god and by seint' Iohñ
My lord *quod* he whan þat' þe weder is faire
Wiþouten wynd or *per*tourbyng' of' ayre
let' bringe a cart' whel heer in-to þis halle
But' loke þat' he haue his spokes alle
xij. spokes haþ a carte whel comunly [leaf 129]
And bringe me þanne .xij. freres wite 3e why
ffor .xiij. is a couent' as I gesse
3oure confessour hede for his worþinesse
Schal *per*forme vp þe nombre of' his couent'
þanne schullen þey knelen doun by oon assent'
And to eu*ery* spokes ende in þis manere
fful sadly leye his nose schal þe freere
3oure noble confessour þere god him saue
Schal holde his nose vpright' vnto þe naue
þanne schal þis cherl wiþ bely styf' and tou3t'
As any tabour hider ben y-brought'
And sette him on þe wheel right' on þis carte
vpon þe naue and make him lete a farte
And 3e schuln se vp *per*il of' my lijf'
By preof' which þat' is demonstratif'

þat' equaly þe soun of' hit' wole wende
And eeke þe stynke vnto þe spokes ende
Saue þat' þis worþi man þis confessour
By cause he is a man of' gret honour
Schal haue þe ferste fruytes as resoñ is
þe noble vsage of' freres 3it' is þis
þe worþy men of' hem schuln ferst' be serued
And certeinly he haþ it' wel disserued
he haþ to day taught vs so mochil good
Wiþ preching' in þe pulpit' þer he stood
þat' I may vouche sauf' I say for me
ne hadde þe firste smelle of' fartes þre
And so wolde alle his couent' hardily
he bereþ him so faire and holyly
þe lord þe lady & eche man saue þe ffrere
Sayden þat' Iankyn) spak' in þis matiere
As wel as euclide or protholome
Touchinge þe cherle þey seyden subtilite
And by heyh witte make him speke as he spake
he is no fool ne no demonyake
And Iankyn haþ y-wonne a newe goune [leaf 129, back]
My tale is doon) we ben almost' at' towne

¶ Here endeþ þe Somnours tale

GROUP E. FRAGMENT VI.

§ 1. THE CLERK'S HEAD-LINK.

CORPUS MS.

¶ here bygynneþ þe *pro*loge of þe clerk of Oxe*n*ford

[*on leaf* 129, *back*]

SIre clerk of Oxenford oure oste sayde
3e ryde as stille and coy as doþ a mayde
Were newe spoused sittyng atte bord
This day ne herde I of 3oure tonge a word
I trowe þat 3e studye aboute som sophime
But Salamon saiþ eue*r*y þing haþ tyme ¶ Pausac*io*
ffor goddes sake beþ of bettre cheere
It nys no tyme for to stodyen heere
Telle vs som mery tale by 3oure fay
ffor what man þat is entred in-to play
he needes mote vnto þe play assente
But p*re*ches nat as freres don in lente
To make vs for oure olde synnes wepe
Ne þat þy tale make vs not to sleepe ¶ Pausac*io*
Telle vs som mery þing of auentures /
3oure termes 3oure coloures 3oure figures
keep hem in store til so be 3e enditen
by stile as when þat men to kinges writen
Spekeþ so plein at þis tyme I 3ou p*ray*
þat we may vnderstonde what 3e say ¶ Pausac*io*
This worþi clerk benignely answerde
Oft *quod* he I am vnder 3our 3erde
3e han of vs as now þe gouernance
And þ*er*fore wol I do yow obeissance

As fer as reson axeþ hardel
I wil 3ou telle a tale which þat I
lernede at' paradovse of' a worþi clerk'
As preued by his wordes and his werk' 28
he is now deed and nayled in his cheste
I pray to god to 3iue his soule reste ¶ Pausacio
ffraunces Petrake þe laureat' poete
highte þis clerk' whos retorique sweete [a leaf out] 32
[enlumynede al ytaille / of Poyetrie [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, leaf 66
as Lynyan dide / of Philosophie
or lawe / or other arte par-ticulere
but deth̄ that wol not suffre vs / duelle here 36
but as it were / a twynkelyng of an yghe
hem both̄ hath̄ sleyn / *and* alle shulle we dye
but forthe to tellen / of this worthy man
that taughte me this tale / as I bigan 40
I sey that he first / wigh̄t highe stile enditeth̄
er he the body of his tale writeth̄
a proheme / in the which̄ discerneth̄ he
the mounde / *and* of Saluce the contre 44
and speḳith̄ of Appenyn the hilles highe
that ben the boundes / of west Lumbardie
and of the Mounte Vesulus / in special
where as the Poo / out of a wel smal 48
takith̄ his first spryngyng / *and* his sours
and holte even streighte wey / his cours
to Emel-ward / to Ferrare / *and* to Venyse
the which̄ a longe thing were / to devise 52
and trewely / as to my Iugement
me thinkith̄ it a thing / inpertynent
save he wol conveye / his matiere
but this is the tale / which̄ ye shal hiere 56

Here endith̄ the clerke of Oxonford his prolog.

And next folwyng bigynneth his tale of Gresilde.
[MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *on leaf* 66]

Ther was in the weste side of ytaylle
dowñ at the rote / of Vesulus the colde
a lusty playne / habundaunte of vitaylle
where many a toure *and* towne / thow maist biholde
that founded were / in tyme of faders olde
and many a-nother / dilectable sight
and Saluces / this noble contre hight

A Marques whilom / was lord of that londe
as were his worthi eldres / him bifore
and obeysaunte / ay redy to his honde
were alle his liges / both lesse *and* more [*leaf* 66, *back*]
thus in delite he lyved / *and* hath done yore
biloued *and* drad / thorugh favour of fortune
both of his lordis / *and* of his comune

¶ Therwith he was / to speken of lynage
the gentilest borne / of al Lumbardye
a faire persone *and* strong / *and* yonge of age
and ful of honoure / *and* of curtesie
discrete I-nough / his contre for to gye
saue in som thingis / he was to blame
and Walter was this yonge lord-is name

¶ I blame him thus / that he considred noughte
in tyme comyng / what myghte him betide
but on his lust present / was al his thoughte
as for to havke *and* hounte / on euery side
wel nygh al other cures / lete he slide
and eke he nolde / *and* that was worst of alle
wedde no wiff / for aughte that myghte bifalle

¶ Oonly that poynt / his peple bare soore [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
that flokmele on a day / they to him wente
and oon of hem / that wysest was of loore
or ellis that the lord / best wolde assente 88
that he shulde telle him / what his peple mente
or ellis coude he wel / shewe suche matire
he to the Marques seide / as ye shulle hire 91

¶ O noble Marques / youre humanite 92
assurith vs / *and* yevith vs hardynesse
as offte as tyme / is of necessite
that we to yow mow telle / oure hevynesse 95
acceptith now lord / of youre gentilnesse
that we with pitevous herte / to yow pleyne
and lete not youre eeris / my voys disdeyne 98

¶ Al haue I nought to done / in this matire 99
more than a-nother man hath / in this place
yit for as meche / as ye my lord / so dere
haue alwey shewed to me / favour*e* *and* grace 102
I dar the better axe of yow / a space [*leaf* 67]
of audience / to shewe oure requeste
and ye my lord / to do right as ye leste 105

¶ For certes lord / so wel vs likith yow 106
and al youre werke / *and* haue done that we] [Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract ends*]
Ne coude nought vs self deuysen how [Corpus MS, *leaf* 130]
We mighte lyue in more felicite 109
Saue o þing lord if it 3our wille be
That for to be a wedded man 3ou leste
þen were 3oure peple in sou*er*eyn hertes reste 112

[*No breaks in the Corpus MS between the stanzas.*]

Boweþ 3oure nekke vnder þat blisful 3ok 113
Of souerainte and nought of *ser*uise
Which þat men clepe spousaile or wedlok
And þenkeþ lord amonges 3oure þoughtes wise 116

[how that oure dayes pas / in sondre gise] [Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
ffor þough we slepe or wake or renne or ryde
Ay fleeþ þe tyme and wol noman abyde 119

And þoughꝫ 3oure greene þoughtes floure as 3it 120
In crepeþ age alway as stille as stoon
And deth manaceþ euery age and smyt
In ech astat for þer askapeþ noon 123
And also certein as we knowe echoon
þat we schulle deye as vncertein we alle
Ben of þat day þat deþ schal on vs falle 126

¶ Acceпteþ þanne of vs þe trewe entent 127
þat neuere 3it ne refused 3our heste
And we lord if þat 3e wile assent
To chese 3ou a wijf in schort tyme atte leste 130
Borne of þe gentilest and of þe meste
Of alle þis lond so þat it oughte seme
honour to god and 3ou as we can deme 133

¶ Delyuer vs out of al þis busy dede 134
And tak a wijf for hihe goddes sake
ffor if it so bifelle as god forbede
þat þoruꝫh 3oure deþ 3our lynage schulde slake 137
And þat a straunge successour schulde take
3oure heritage. o wo were vs on lyue
wherfore we pray 3ow hastily to wyue 140

¶ here meke preyer and here pitous cherte 141
Made þe marquys herte haue pite
[ye wol quod he / myn owne peple dere] [Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
To þat I neuer erst þou3te streyne me 144
I me reioysed of my liberte
That selden tyme is founden mariage [leaf 130, back]
Ther I was free I moste be in seruage 147

¶ But' naþeles I se 3our trewe ententе 148
And truste vpon 3our witte and haue don ay
Wherfore with al my fre wille I wil assente
To wedde me as sone as euer I may 151
But' þer as 3e han profred me to day
To chese me a wijf' I 3ou relesse
þat' choys and pray 3ou of' 3oure profre cesse 154

¶ ffor I wot þat' children often ben 155
vnlike here eldres hem byfore
Bounte comþ al of' god not' of' þe stren
Of' which þei beþ engendred and y-bore 158
I truste in goddes bounte and þerfore
my mariage and myn astat' and reste
I him bitake he may do as him leste 161

¶ lat' me alone in chesyng' of' my wijf' 162
But' I 3ou pray and charge vpon 3our lijf'
That' charge vpon my bak' I wil endure
þat' what' wijf' I take I þe assure 165
To worschipe hire whil þat' hire lijf' may dure
In word in werk' boþe heere and euerywhere
As sche an Emperoures doughter were 168

¶ And forþermore þis schal 3e swere þat' 3e 169
A3ein my choys schulle neuer grucche ne stryue
ffor siþþe I schal forgo my liberte
At' 3oure request' as euer mote I þriue 172
[there as myn herte is sett / there woll I wyve] [Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
And but' 3e wol assente in such manere
I pray 3ou speke nomore of' þis matiere 175

¶ Wiþ hertly wil þey sweren and assenten 176
To al þis þing' þer seyde no wight' nay
Beseking' him of' grace or þat' þei wenten
þat' he wolde graunten hem a certein day 179

Of' his spousaile as sone as euer he may
ffor ȝet' alway þe poeple somwhat' dredde
lest' þat' þis marquys no wijf' wolde wedde 182

He graunted hem a day such as him leste [leaf 131] 183
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly
And sayde he dide al þis at' þair requeste
And þay wiþ humble entent ful buxomly 186
knelyng' vpon here knees ful reuerently
him þonkyng' alle and þus þay haue an ende
Of' here entent' and home aȝein þei wende 189

And her vpon he to his officers 190
Comandeþ for þe feste to purveye
And to his priue knightes and squyers
Such charge ȝaf' as him list' on hem leye 193
And þay to his comaundement obeye
And ech of' hem doþ al his diligence
To do vnto þe feste reuerence 196

[*PART II.*]

¶ *Prima pars*

NOught' fer fro þe paleys honurable 197
Wher as þe marquys schop his mariage
Ther stood a throop of' þe Cite delitable
In which þat' pore folk' of' þat' village 200
hadden here bestes and here herbergage
And of' here labour toke here sustienance
After þe erþe ȝaf' hem abundañce 203

Among' þis pore folk' þer dwelled a man 204
Which was holde pouerest' of' hem alle
But heihe god sum tyme sende can
his grace in to a litel oxe stalle 207
Ianicula men of' þat' throop him calle
A doughter hadde he fair ynough to sight'
¶ And Grisildis þis ȝonge mayden hight 210

But for to speke of ver*teuous* beaute 211
þanne was sche on þe fairest vnder sonne
fful pouerely y-fostered was sche
No likerous lust was in hire herte ronne 214
Wel oftere of þe welle þan of þe tonne
Sche drank for sche wolde vertues plese
Sche knew wel labour but non ydel ese 217

¶ But þough þis mayden tendre were of age 218
3et in þe brest of hire virginite [leaf 131, back]
Ther was y-closed rype and scharpe corage
And in a gret reuerence and charite 221
hire olde pouere fader fostred sche
A fewe scheep spynnyng on feld sche kepte
Sche nolde not ben ydel til þat sche slepte 224

And whan sche com homward sche wolde bringe 225
Wortes or oþer herbes tymes ofte
The which sche schredde and seth for hir lyuynge
And made hir bed ful harde and no þing softe / 228
And ay sche kepte hir faderes lif on lofte
Wiþ euery obeissance and diligence
That childe may do to faderes reuerence / 231

¶ vpon Grisilde þe pouer creature 232
fful ofte siþe þe marquys sette his ye
As he on huntyng rood *per*auenture
And whan it fell þat he might hir aspye 235
he not wiþ wantoun lokyng of folye
his eyen caste on hire but in sad wyse
vpon hir cheere he wolde him ofte auyse 238

¶ Commendyng in his herte hir wo*m*manhede 239
And eek hire vertu passyng any wight
Of so 3ong age as wel in cheere as in dede
ffor þough þe poeple haue no gret insight 242

In vertu he considerd ful right
hir bounte and disposed þat he wolde
Wedde hir oonly if euer he wedde scholde

The day of weddyng com but no wight can
Telle what womman þat it schulde be
ffor which meruayle wondreþ many man
And seyde whan þey were in pryuyte
Wil nat oure lord ȝit leue his vanite
Wil he nat wedde allas allas þe while
Why wol he þus himself and vs begile

But naþeles þis marquys haþ don make
Of gemmes sette in golde and in asure
Broches and rynges for Grisildes sake [leaf 132]
And of hire cloþing tok he þe mesure
Of a mayden like to hire stature
And eek of oþer ornamentes alle
That vnto such a weddyng schulde falle

¶ þe tyme of vnderne of þe same day
Approcheþ þat þis weddyng schulde be
And al þe paleys but was in aray
Boþe halle and chambre eche in his degre
houses of offices stuffed wiþ plente
Ther maystow se of deynteuous vitayle
That may be founde as feer as last ytayle

¶ This real marquys richely arrayed
lordes and ladyes in his companye
The which vnto þe feste were prayed
And of his retenue þe bachelrie
With many a soun of sondry melodye
vnto þe vilage of which I tolde
In þis array þe righte wey haþ holde

¶ Grisilde of þis god wot' ful Innocent
þat' for hire schapen al þis array was
To fecche water at' a welle is wente
And comeþ home as sone as euer sche may
ffor wel sche hadde herd seyde þat' ilke day
That' marquys schulde wedde and if' sche might'
Sche wolde fayn han seyn some of' þat' sight

¶ Sche þought' I wille wiþ oþre maydens stonde
þat' ben my felawes in oure dore and se
The marquisesse and þerfore wol I fonde
To do at' home as sone as it' may be
þe labour which þat' longeþ vnto me
And þanne I may at' leysyr hire by-holde
If' sche þis wey vnto þe castel holde

¶ And as sche wolde ouer hire þresshfold gon
The marquys cam and gan hir for to calle
And sche sette doun hir water potte anon
Bysyde þis þresshfolde of' þis oxe stalle [leaf 132, back]
And doun vpon hir knees sche gan to falle
Wiþ sad contynaūce and kneleþ stille
Til sche had herd what' was þe lordes wille

þis þoughtful marquys spak' vnto þis mayde
fful soberly and seyde in þis manere
Wher is ȝour fader Grisildis he sayde
And sche wiþ reuerence in humble chere
Answerde lord he is al redy heere
And in sche goþ wiþoute lenger lette
And to þe marquys hir fader sche fette

¶ he by þe hond þan took' þis olde man/
And sayde þus whan he him hadde a syde
Ianycala I neyþer may ne can
lengere þe plesaunce of' myn herte hyde

If þat þou vouche saff what so betyde
þy doughter I wol take or þat I wende
As for my wijf vnto hire lyues ende

¶ þou louest me I wot it wel certain
And art my feiþful liege man y-bore
And al þat likeþ me I dar wel sayn
It likeþ þe and specialliche *per*fore
Telle me þat poynt as I haue sayd bifore
If þat þou wilt vnto þat purpos drawe
To take me as for þi sone in lawe

¶ The sodeyn cas þe man astoned so
þat reed he wax abayst and al quakynge
he stood vnneþe he sayde worde no mo
But only þus lord *quod* he my willynge
Is as ȝe wille nought aȝeins ȝour likynge
I wole noþing ȝe be my lord so dere
But as ȝou luste gouerneþ þis matiere

¶ ȝit wol I quod þis marquys softely
þat in þi chambre I and þou and sche
haue a collacioñ and wostow why
ffor I wil axe if þat hire wille be
To be my wijf and reule hire after me [leaf 133]
And al þis schal be doon in þi *pre*sence
I wol not speke out of þin audience

¶ And in here chambre whil þay were aboute
here tretees which þat ȝe schul after heere
þe poeple cam in to þe hous wiþoute
And wondred hem in hor honeste manere
And tentyfly sche kepte hir fader deere
But outerly Grysildis wondre might
ffor neuer erst ne saugh sche such a sight

¶ No wonder is þouȝ þat' sche were astoned 337
To se so gret' a geste in þat' place
Sche neuer was to suche gestes woned
ffor which sche loked wiþ ful pale face 340
But' schortly forþ þis mater for to chace
This aren þe wordes þat' þe marquys sayde
To his benigne verray feyþful mayde 343

¶ Grisilde he seyde ȝe schule wel vnderstonde 344
It' likeþ to ȝoure fader and to me
That' I ȝou wedde and eek' it may so stonde
As I suppose ȝe wil þat' it' so be 347
But' þese demaundes ax I first' q*uod* he
¶ þat' siþþen it' schal be don in hasty wise
Wille ȝe assente or elles ȝou auyse 350

I seye þis be redy wiþ good herte 351
To al my lust' and þat' I frely may
As me best' þinkeþ do ȝou knowe or smerte
And neuer þe to grucche it' night' ne day 354
And eek' whan I say ȝe ne say not' nay
Neiþ*er* by word ne by frounyng' contynance
Swere þis and heer I swere oure alliance 357

¶ Weddyng' vpon þis word quakyng' for drede 358
Sche sayde lord vndigne or vnworþy
Am I to þat' ilke ħono*ur* þat' ȝe me bede
But' as ȝe wille ȝoure self' right' so wol I 361
And here I swere þat' neuer willyngly
In werk' ne þoughť I nyl ȝou disobeye [leaf 133, back]
ffor to be deed þough me were loþ to deye 364

¶ This is ynough Grisylde myn q*uod* he 365
And forþ he goþ wiþ a ful sobre cheere
Out' at' þe dore and after þat' cam sche
And to þe poeple he sayde in þis manere 368

þis is my wyf' q*uo*d he þat' stondeþ heere
honoureþ hire and loueþ eek' I preye
Who so me loueþ þer is no more to seye

And for þat' noþing' of' hir olde gere
Sche scholde bringe in to his hous he bad
That' wo*m*men schulde dispoylen hire right' þere
Of' which þis ladyes were noþing' glad
To handle hire cloþes wher Inne sche was clad
But nameles þis mayden bright' of' hewe
ffro foot' to heed þey cloþed han al newe

¶ hire heres han þey kempte þat' layn vntressed
fful rudely and wiþ hire fyngres smale
þay tyred hire heed þat' longe rudely lay dressed
Of' hire array what' schulde I make a tale
Sche is now fair of' hew þat' arst' was pale
vnneþe þe poeple hir knew for hir fairnesse
Whan sche t*ra*nsmewed was in such richesse

¶ This marquys haþ hir wedded wiþ a ryng'
Brouȝt' for þe same cause and hire sette
vpon an hors snow whyt' and wel amblyng'
And to þe paleys or he lenger lette
Wiþ ioyful poeple þat hire ladde and mette
Conueyed hire and þus þe day þay spende
In reuel til þe sonne gan descende

¶ And schortly forþ þis tale for to chace
I seye þat' to þis newe marquysesse
God haþ such fauour sent' hire of' his *gra*ce
That' it' ne semed nought be kykenesse
That' sche was born and fedde in rudenesse
As in a cote or in an Oxe stalle/
But' norisshed in an emp*er*oures halle [leaf 134]

¶ To euery wight' sche woxen is so deere
And worschipful þat' folk' þer sche was bore
And from hire burþe knewe hire þere by 3eere
vnneþe trowede þey but' durst' han swore
þat' to Ianicle of' which I spak' byfore
Sche doughter nas for as by coueiture
hem þoughte sche was anoþer creature

¶ ffor þough euere vertuous was sche
Sche was encressed in such excellence
Of' þewes good y-sette in heih bounte
And so discrete and fair of' eloquence
So benigne and digne of' reuerence
And coude so þe poeples herte embrace
þat' ech hir loueþ þat' lokeþ on hir face

¶ Not' only of' salues in þe toun
Pirplissched was þe bounte of' hir name
But' eek' besyde in many a regiõ
If' on sayde wel anoþer sayde þe same
So spredeþ of' hire heih bounte & fame
That' men and wommen als wel 3onge as olde
Gon to salice vpon hir to byholde

¶ Thus Walter lowly nat' but' really
Wedded wiþ fortunate honeste
In goddes pees lyueþ ful esily
At' hom and outward grace ynough hadde he
And for he saugh þat' vnder lough degre
Was ofte vertu hyd þe poeple him helde
A prudent man and þat' is seyn ful seelde

¶ Nat' oonly þis Grisildis þurgh hir witte
Coude al þe fait' of' wyfly homlynesse
But' eke whan þat' þe cas requyred it
The comun profyt' coude sche redresse

þer nas discorde rancour ne heuynesse
In al þat lond þat sche coupe appese
And wisly bringe hem alle in hertes eese 434

¶ Though þat hire housbonde absent were anon [leaf 134, back]
If gentil men or oþer of hire countre
Were wroþe sche wolde bringen hem at on
So wys and rype wordes hadde sche / 438
And Iuggements of so gret equite
þat sche from heuen sent was as men wende
þe poeple to plese and euery wrong to amende 441

¶ Nat long tyme after þat þis Grisilde 442
Was wedded sche a douȝter haþ y-bore
Al hadde hir leuer haue born a knaue childe
Glad was þis marquys and his folk þerfore 445
ffor þough a mayden childe come al biforę
Sche may vnto a knaue child atteyne
Be lykened siþþe sche is not bareyne 448

¶ Explicit ij^{a} pars.

Ther felle as it bifalleþ tymes mo 449
When þat þis childe had souked but a þrowe
This marquys in his herte longeþ so
To tempte his wyf hir sadnesse for to knowe 452
þat he ne might out of his herte þrowe .
¶ This merueylous desir his wijf to assaye
Needeles god wot he þought hir to affraye 455

he hadde assayed hire ynough bifore 456
And fond hir euer good what needed it
hire for to tempte and alway more and more
But as for me I seye þat euele it sitte 459
þough some men it preyse for a subtil witte
To assaye a wijf whan þat it is no neede
And putten hire in anguissche and in dreede 462

¶ ffor which þis marquys wrought' in þis manere 461
he com a night' allone þer as sche lay
Wiþ sterne fate and wiþ trouble cheere
And seyde þus Grisilde *quod* he þat day *466*
þat' I 3ou took' out' of' 3oure pore aray
And putte 3ou in astat' of' heye noblesse
3e haue nou3t' forgeten as I gesse 469

¶ I seye Grisilde þis present' dignite 470
In which I haue putte 3ow as I trowe [leaf 135]
makeþ 3ou nou3t' for3eteful for to be
þat' I 3ou took' in pouer astate ful lowe 473
ffor eny wele 3e mote 3oure selue knowe
Tak' heed of' euery word þat' I 3ou say
þer nys no wight' þat' heereþ it' but' we tway 476

¶ 3e wote 3oure selue wel how þat' 3e come here 477
In to þis hous þat' nys nat' longe ago
And þough to me 3e be right' leeue and deere
vnto my gentiles 3e ben noþing' so 480
þey say to hem it is gret' schame and wo
ffor to be sogette and ben in seruage
To þe þat' art' born of' a smal vilage 483

¶ And namely sipþe þy dou3ter was y-bore 484
This wordes han þey spoke douteles
But I desire as I haue don byfore
To lyue my lyf' wiþ hem in reste and pees 487
I may not' in þis cas be recheles
I mot' do wiþ þi dou3ter for þe beste
Nou3t' as I wolde but' as my gentils leste 490

¶ And 3it' god wot' þis is ful loþ to me 491
But' naþeles wiþouten 3our wetynge
I wil nat' do but þis wil I *quod* he
That' 3e to me assent/ as in þis þinge 494

Schewe now ȝour pacience as in werkynge
þat' ȝe me hight' and swor in ȝour village
That' day þat' maked was our mariage 497

¶ Whan sche had herd al þis sche nat ameued 498
Noyþer in word ne cheere ne contynaūce
ffor as it semed sche was nat' agreued
Sche sayde lord al liþ in ȝour plesaunce 501
My childe and I wiþ hertely obeissance
ben ȝoures al and ȝe mowe saue & spille
ȝoure owne þing' workiþ after ȝour wille 504

¶ Ther may no þing' so god my soule saue 505
liken to ȝou þat' may displesen me
Ne I desyre noþing' for to haue [leaf 135, back]
Ne drede for to lese saue oonly þe 508
þis wille is in myn herte and ay schal be
No lengþe of' tyme or deþ may þis deface
Ne chaunge my corrage to anoþer place 511

¶ Glad was þis marquys for hire answeryng' 512
But' ȝit' he feigned as it were not' so
Al dreery was his cheer' as his lokyng'
Whan þat' he schulde out/ of' þe chambre go 515
Sone after þis a forlong' way or tuo
he priuely haþ tolde al his entente
vnto a man and to his wijf' him sente 518

¶ A maner sergeant' was þis priue man 519
The which he feiþful often founden hadde
In þinges gret' and eek' such folk' wel can
Don execucioū of' þinges badde 522
The lord knew wel þat' he him loued and dradde
And whan þis sergaunt' knew his lordes wille
In to þe chambur he stalked him ful stille 525

¶ Ma dame he sayde ȝe moote forȝiue it me
Though I do þing' þe which I am constreyned
ȝe ben so wys þat' ful wel knowe ȝe
þat' lordes heestes mowe not' be feyned
þey mowe wel be weyled or compleyned
But' men moot' needes to here lust' obeye
And so wol I þer nys nomore to seye

¶ þis child am I comaunded for to take
And spak' no more but' out' þe childe he hente
Dispitously and gan a cheere make
As þough he wold han slayn it' or he wente
Grisildes mot' al soffre and consente
And as a lombe sche sitteþ meke & stille
And lete þis cruel sergant' han his wille

¶ Suspeccious was þe defame of' þis man
Suspecte his face suspecte his word also
Suspecte þe tyme in which he þis bygan.
Allas hir doughter þat sche loued so [leaf 136]
Sche wende he wolde haue slayen it' right' þo
But' naþeles sche nouþer weep ne siked
Conformyng' hire to þat' þe marquys liked

¶ But' atte laste speke sche bigan
And mekely sche to þe sergaunt' preyed
So as he was a worþy gentil man
þat' sche moste kisse hir childe or þat' it' deyde
And in hir barm þis litel child sche leyde
Wiþ ful sadde face and gan þis childe to blisse
And lulled it' and after gan it' kisse

¶ And þus sche seyde in hire benigne vois
ffar wel my child I schal þe neuer se
But' siþ I haue þe marked wiþ þe croys
Of' þilke fader blessed mote þou be

þat' for vs deyed vpon a crosse of' tre
þy soule litel child I him bytake
ffor þis nigħt' schalt' þou deye for my sake

¶ I trowe to a norice in þis cas
It' hadde ben hard þis reuþe for to se
Wel might a mooder þan han cryed allas
But' naþeles so sadde stedefast' was sche
þat' sche endured alle aduersite
And to þe sergeaunt' mekely sche sayde
haue her aȝein ȝour litel ȝonge mayde

¶ Goþ now quod sche and doþ my lordes heste
But' o þing' wold I pray ȝou of' ȝour grace
þat' but' my lord forbad ȝou atte leste
Burieþ þis litel body in som place
þat' bestes ne no briddes it to-race
But' he ne wolde no word to þe purpos seye
But/ tok' þe childe and went' vpon his weye

¶ þis sergaunt' cam vnto þis lord ageyne
And of' Grisildes wordes and hir cheere
he tolde him word for word in schort' and pleyne
And him presenteþ with his douȝter dere
Somwhat' þis lord hadde reuþe in his manere [leaf 136, back]
But' naþeles his purpos held he stille
As lordes don whan þay wol haue here wille

And bad þis sergaunt' þat' he priuyly
Schulde þis child ful ofte wynde and wrappe
Wiþ alle circumstaunces tendrely
And carye it in a coffre or in a lappe
But' vpon peyne his heed of' for to swappe
þat' noman schulde knowe of' his entent
Ne when he come ne whider þat' he went

¶ But' at' Boloigne it' to his suster deere 588
That' ilke time of' Panyke was Countesse /
he schulde it' take and schewe hir þis mateere /
Besekyng' hire to don hire besynesse 591
This child to fostre in alle gentilnesse
And whos child þat' it' was he bad hire hyde
ffrom euery wight' for ought' þat' may betyde 595

¶ þis sergaunt goþ and haþ fulfild þis þing' 596
But' now to þis markys retorne we
ffor now goþ he ful ofte ymagynyng'
If' by his wyffes cheer he mighte se 599
Or by hire word apparceyue þat sche
Were chaunged but he neuer coude hir fynde
But euer in oon ylike sad and kynde 602

¶ As glad as besy as humble in seruice 603
And eek' in loue as sche was wont' to be
Was sche to him in euery maner wyse
Ne of' hir doughter nought' a word spak' sche 606
Accident for non aduersite
Was seyn in hire ne neuer hir douȝter name
Ne nempned sche in ernest' ne in game 609

¶ Explicit iij[a] pars.

IN þis astat' þer ben passed .iiij. ȝer 610
sche wiþ childe was but as god wolde
A knaue childe sche bar by þis walter
fful gracious and fair for to biholde 613
And whan þat' folk' it' to his fader tolde
Nat' onlich he but' al þe cõntre merye [leaf 137]
Was for þis child and god þey þank' and herye 616

¶ Whan it' was tuo ȝeer old and fro be breste 617
Departed of' his norice on a day
This marquys caughte ȝit' anoþer leste

To tempte his wijf' 3it' ofter if' he may
O nedeles was sche tempted in assay
But' wedded men knowen no mesure
Whan þat' þay fynde a pacient creature

¶ Wijf' *quod* þis marquys 3e han herd of' þis
My poeple sekerly bereþ heuy of' oure mariage
And namely siþþe my sone boren is
Now is it' wers þan euer in al oure age
The murmur sleþ myn herte and my corage
ffor to myn eeres comeþ þe voys so smerte
That' it' wel neih destroyed haþ myn herte

¶ Now sey þey þus whan walter is agon
þanne schal þe blood of' Ianicle succede
And ben oure lord for oþer haue we non
Suche wordes seiþ my poeple it is no drede
Wel ought' I of' such murmur taken heede
ffor certeinly I drede such sentence
þough þey nought' pleyne speke in my*n* audience

¶ I wolde lyue in pees if' þat' I mighte
Wher fore I am disposed outerly
As I his suster seruede be nighte
Right' so þenke I to serue him priuely
þus warne I 3ou for 3e nou3t' sodeinly
Out' of' 3our self' for no wo schulde outraye
Beþ pacient' and þ*er*fore I 3ou praye

¶ I haue q*uod* sche sayd þus and euer schal
I wille no þing' ne nyl no þing' certayne
But' as 3ou liste nou3t' greueþ me al
þough þat' my doughter and my sone be slayne
At' 3our comaundeme*n*t' þis is to sayne
I haue nou3t' had no part' of' children tweyne
But' first' siknesse and after wo and peyne [leaf 137, back]

¶ 3e ben oure lord doþ wiþ 3our owne þing' 652
Riȝt' as 3ou liste askeþ no rede at me
ffor as I lifte at' home al my cloþinge
Whan I first' come to 3ou right' so *quod* sche 655
lefte I my wille and al my liberte
And tok' 3our cloþing' wherfore I 3ou *preye*
Doþ 3our plesañce I wil 3our lust' obeye 658

¶ And certes if' I hadde *pre*science 659
3oure wille to knowe or 3e 3our lust' me tolde
I wolde it' do wiþouten necligence
But' now I wot' 3our lust' and what' 3e wolde 662
Al 3our plesaunce ferme and stable I holde
ffor wiste I þat' my deþ wolde do 3ou ese
Right' gladly wolde I deye 3ou to plese 665

¶ Deþ may not' make no comp*ari*so*un* 666
vnto oure loue and whan þis marquys say
þe contenaunce of' his wijf' he cast a doun
his eyȝen tuo and wondreþ þat' sche may 669
In pacience suffre al þis array
And forþ he goþ wiþ drery contynaunce
But' to his herte it was right' gret' plesañce 672

¶ þis Oggel *ser*gaunt' in þe same wise 673
þat' he hir dou*ȝter* caughte right' so he
Or worse if' men worse can deuyse
haþ hent' hir sone þat' ful was of' beaute 676
And euer in oon so pacient was sche
That' sche no cheere made of' heuynesse
But' kiste hir sone and after gan it' blesse 679

¶ Saue þis sche *pre*yed him if' þat' he mighte 680
hir litel sone he wolde in erþe graue
his tendre lymes delicat' to sight'
ffro foules and fro bestes for to saue 683

but' sche non answer of' him mighte haue
he wente his wey as he no þing' ne roughte
But' to Boloigne he tendrely it' brouȝte 686

¶ This marquys wondreþ euer lenger þe more [leaf 138] 687
vpon hir pacience and if' þat' he
Ne hadde soþly knowe þer bifore
þat' parfitly hir children loued sche 690
he wolde haue wende þat' of' som subtilte
And of' malice or for cruel corrage
That' sche hadde suffred þis wiþ sad visage 693

¶ But' wel he knewe next' himself' certayne 694
Sche loued hir children best' in euery wise /
But' now of' wommen wolde I aske fayne
If þise assayes mighte nouȝt' suffise / 697
What' couþe a stordy housbonde more deuyse
To proeue his wijf' and hire stedfastnesse
And he contynuyng' euer in sturdynesse 700

¶ But' þer ben folk' of' such condicioñ 701
That' whan þey haue a certein purpos take
They can nought' stynte of' here entencioñ
But' right' as þey were bounden to a stake 704
þey wil nat' of' þat' firste purpos slake /
Right' so þis marquys fully haþ purposed
To tempte his wijf' as he was first' disposed 707

¶ he wayteþ if' by word or contynance 708
That' sche to him was chaunged of' corage
But' neuer coude he fynde variance
Sche was ay oon in hert' and in visage 711
And ay þe furþer þat' sche was in age
þe more trewe if þat' it' were possible
Sche was to him more lowe and more pesible 714

¶ ffor wh̄ich it' semed þus þat' of' hem tuo
þer nas but' oo wille for as walter liste
That' same lust' was hire plesance also
And god he þanked al fel for þe beste
Sche schewed weel for no worldly vnreste
A wijf' as of' hir self' no þing' ne scholde
Wille in effecte but' as hir housbond wolde

þe sclaundre of walter ofte and wyde spradde
That' of' a cruel herte he wikkedly [leaf 138, back]
ffor he a pore wo*m*man wedded hadde
haþ murdred boþe his children priuely
Such murmur was among' hem comunly
No wonder is for to þe poeples eere
Ther com no word but' þat' þay mordred were

ffor which þer as his poeple þer bifore
hadde loued him wel þe sclaunder of' his diffame
Made hem þat' þey him hatede *þer*fore
To ben a murdrer is an hateful name
But' naþeles for ernest' ne for game
he of' his cruel purpos nolde stente
To tempte his wijf' was sette al his entente

¶ Whan þat' his douȝter twelf' ȝer was of' age
he to þe court' of' Rome in subtil wise
Enformed of' his wille and sente his message
Comaundyng' hem suche bulles to deuyse/
In þis maner and in þis same gyse
how þat' þe pope as for his poeples reste
Bad him to wedde ano*þer* if' him leste

¶ I say he bad þay scholden countrefete
The popes bulles making' mencioñ
þat' he haþ leue his firste wijf' to lete
As by þe popes dispensacioñ

To stynte rancour and discencioñ
Bitwixe his poeple and him þus spak þe bulle
þe which þey han publisshed atte fulle 749

¶ The rude poeple as it no wonder is 750
Wenden ful wel þat it hadde be riȝt so
But whan þis tyþinges come to Grisildis
I deme þat hir herte was ful wo 753
And sche ylike sad for euermo
Disposed was þis humble creature
To aduersite of fortune al tendure 756

¶ Abydyng euer his lust and his plesañce 757
To whom sche was ȝiuen herte and al
As to hire worldly verray suffisaunce [leaf 139]
But schortly if þis story telle I schal 760
This marquys writen haþ in special
A lettre in which he scheweþ his entente
And secretly he to boloigne it sente 763

¶ To þe erl of Panyke which þat hadde þo 764
Wedded his suster preyed he specially
To bringen home aȝein his children tuo
But he o þinge preyed outrely 767
With alle his herte ful affectuously
þat he to no wigħt þough men wolde enquere
Schulde nought telle whos children þat þei were 770

¶ But seye þe mayden schulde y-wedded be 771
Vnto þe marquys of Saluce right anon
And as þis erle was preyed right so dede he
ffor at day sette he on his day is goon 774
Toward Saluce and lordes many oon
In riche array þis mayden for to gyde
hire ȝonge broþer ryding by hir syde 777

Arrayed was toward hir mariage
This freisshe mayde ful of gemmes cleere
hir broþer which þat vij. 3eer was of age
Arrayed eek ful freissch in his manere
And þus in gret noblesse and wiþ glad cheere
Toward Saluces schapynge hire iourneye
ffro day to day þey ryden in here weye

¶ Quarta pars.

[*PART V.*]

AMong al þis after his wicked vsage
þis marquys 3it his wijf gan tempte more
To þe outrest proef of hire corage
ffully to han experiment and lore
If þat sche was as stidefast as bifore
he on a day in open audience
fful boustously haþ seid hir þis sentence

Certes Grisildis I hadde ynough plesaunce
To han 3ou to my wijf for 3our goodnesse
As for 3our trouþe and 3our obeissañce
Nat for 3our lignage ne for 3our richesse [leaf 139, back]
But new *quod* he in verray soþfastnesse
þat in gret lorschipe if I wol auyse
þer is gret seruytute in sondry wise

¶ I may not do as euery ploughman may
My poeple me constreyneþ for to take
anoþer wijf and cryen day by day
And eek þe pope rancour for to slake
Consenteþ it þat dar I vndertake
And trewelich þus meche I wil 3ou seye
My newe wijf is comynge by þe weye

¶ Be strong of herte and voyde anon hire place
And þilke doware þat 3e broughten me
Tak it a3ein and *grau*nte it of my grace

Retorneþ to 3our fadres hous *quod* he
No man may alwey haue prosperite
Wiþ euene herte I rede 3ou tendure
þe strok' of' fortune or of' auenture

¶ And sche a3ein answerde in pacience
My lord seyde sche I wot' & wiste alway
how þat' bitwixe 3oure magnificence
And my pouerte no wigħt' can ne may
maken comparisoñ it/ is no nay
I helde me neuer digne in no manere
To be 3our wijf' ne 3it' 3our chamberere

And in þis hous þer 3e me lady made
¶ þe hihe god take I for my witnesse
And also wisly he my soule glade
I neuer heelde me lady ne maystresse
But' humble seruaunt' to 3our worþinesse
And euere schal whil þat' my lijff' may dure
Abouen euery worldly creature

¶ That' 3e so longe of' 3oure benignite
han holde me in honour and nobleye
Wher as I was nou3t' worþy for to be
þat' þanke I god and 3ow whom I preye
ffor3elde it' 3ow þer nys no more to seye [leaf 140]
vnto my fader gladly wol I wende
And wiþ him dwelle vnto my lyues ende

¶ Ther I was fostred of' a child ful smal
Til I be dede my lijf' þer wil I lede
A wydewe clene in body herte and al
ffor siþþe I 3af' to 3ow my maydenhede
And am 3our trewe wijf' it' is no drede
God schilde such a lordes wijf' to take
Anoþer man to housbonde or to make

¶ And of' ȝoure newe wyf' god of' his grace 841
So graunte ȝou wele and heigh prosperite
ffor I wille gladly ȝelden hire my place
In which I was blisful wont' to be 844
ffor siþþe it' likeþ ȝow my lord quod sche
That' whilom weren al myn hertes reste
þat' I schal go I wol go whan ȝou leste 847

¶ But' þer as ȝe me profre swich dowayre 848
Ay I first' brought' it' is wel in my mynde
It' were my wrecched cloþes no þing' fayre
The whiche to me were now ful hard to fynde 851
O goode god how gentil and how kynde
ȝe semede by ȝour speche and ȝour visage
þe day þat' maked was our mariage 854

But' soþ is seyde algate I fynde it' trewe 855
ffor in effecte it' preuede is on me
loue is nat' olde as whan þat' it is newe
But' certes lord for non aduersite 858
To deyen in þe cas it' schal not' be
þat' euer in word or werk' I schal repente
þat' I ȝou ȝaf' myn herte in hol entente 861

¶ My lord ȝe wot' þat in my fadres place 862
ȝe dede me strepe out' of' my pore wede
And richely me cladden of' ȝour grace
To ȝou brought' I nouȝt' elles out' of' drede 865
But' feiþ and nakednesse and maydenhede
And here aȝein ȝour cloþing' I restore [leaf 140, back]
And eek' ȝour weddyng' ryng' for euermore 868

¶ The remenaunt' of' ȝoure Iewellis redy be 869
Wiþinne ȝour chambre dar I sauely sayn
Naked out' of' my fadres hous quod sche
I cam and naked I mot' agayn 872

Al 3oure plesaunce wolde I folwe fayn
But' 3it' I hope it' be nat' 3oure entente
That' smokles out' of' 3oure paleys I wente

¶ 3e coude nou3t' do so dishoneste a þing'
That' þilke wombe in which 3our children leye
Schulde bifore þe poeple in my walkyng'
Be seyn al bare wher fore I 3ou preye /
lat' me not' lik' a worme go by þe weye
Remembre 3ou myn owne lord so deere
I was 3oure wijf' þough I vnworþy were

Wherfore in guerdoñ of' my maydenhede
Which þat' I brought' and not' awey I bere
As voucheþ sauf' to 3if' me to my mede
But' such a smok' as I was wont' to were
þat' I þer wiþ may wrye þe wombe of' here
þat' was 3our wijf' and here take I my leue
Of' 3ou myn owen lord lest' I 3ou greue

¶ The smok/ *quod* he þat' þou hast' on þi bak'
lat it' be stille and bere it' forþ wiþ þe
But' vnneþes þilke word he spak'
But' wente his wey for rewþe and pite
Biforn þe folk' hir seluen strepeþ sche
And in hire smok' wiþ heued and foot' al bare
Toward hir fader hous is sche fare

The folk' hir folwen wepyng' in hire weye
And fortune ay þey cursen as þey gon
But' sche fro weepyng' kepte hire eyhen dreye
Ne in þis tyme word ne spak' sche noon
hire fader þat' þis tydinge herde anon
Curseþ þe day and tyme þat' nature
Schope him to be a lyues creature [leaf 141]

¶ ffor out' of' doute þis olde pouere man
þat' whan þe lord had fulfilde his corage
ffor euer it demed siþ it' first' bigan
him wolde þinke it' were disparage
To wedde oon of' so pore a lynage
To his astat' so lowe to alighte
And voyde hire as sone as euer he mighte

¶ Azein his doughter hastely goþ he
ffor he by noyse of' folk' knew hire comyng'
And wiþ hire olde cote as it' mighte be
he couered hire ful sorwfully wepynge
But' on hir body might' he it not' bringe
ffor rude was þe cloþ and more of' age
By fele dayes þan was hire mariage

Thus wiþ hir fader for a certein space
Dwelleþ þis flour of' wyfly pacience
þat' neyþer by hir wordes ne hir face
Biforn þe folk' ne eek' in here absence /
Ne schewede sche þat' hire was don offence
Ne of' hire heih astat' þe remembrance
Ne hadde sche as by hire contynaunce

No wonder is for in hire gret' astate
hire gost' was euer in plein humilite
No tendre mouþ non herte delicate
No pompe ne semblant' of' realte
But' ful of' pacience and benignite
Discrete and prydeles ay honorable
And to hir housbonde euer meeke and stable

¶ Men speke of' Iob. and most' for his humblesse
As clerkes whan hem liste can endite
Namly of' men but as in soþfastnesse
þough clerkes preyse wommen but a lite

þer can no man in humblesse him aquite
As wo*m*men can ne can be half so trewe
As wo*m*men ben but it be falle of newe 938

[*PART VI.*]

¶ ffro Boloigne is þis erl of Panyke come / [leaf 141, back]
Of which þe fame vp sprong to more & lesse /
And to þe poeples eres alle and some /
Was couþ eek þat a newe marquysesse 942
he wiþ him brought in such pompe and richesse
That neuer was þer seyn wiþ mannes eye
So noble array in al west lumbardye 945

¶ The marquys which þat schope and knew al þis 946
Or þat þis erl were come sent his message
ffor þilke sely pore Grisildis
And sche with humble herte and glad visage 949
nou3t wiþ no swollen herte in hire corage
Cam at his heste and on hir knees hir sette
And reu*e*rently and wysly sche him grette 952

¶ Grisildis q*uod* he my wille is vtterly 953
þis mayden þat schal be wedded to me
Receyued be to morn als really
As possible is in my*n* hous for to be 956
And eke þat eu*e*ry wight in his degre
haue his astat in sittyng and seruise
And heih plesaunce as I can best deuyse 959

¶ I haue no wo*m*ma*n* sufficaunt certayn 960
þe chambres for to arraye in ordinañce
After my lust and þerfore wolde I fayn
Thyn were al such maner gou*e*rnance 963
þou knowest eek of olde al my plesaunce
þough þin array be badde and yuel beseye
Do þou þi deuer atte leste weye 966

¶ Nat' oonly lord þat' I am glad q*uod* sche
To do 3oure lust' but' I desire also
3ou for to serue and plese in my degre
Wiþouten feynyng' and schal eu*er*emo
Ne neuer for no wele ne no woo
Ne schal þe goost' wiþinne my*n* herte stente
To loue 3ou best/ wiþ al my trewe entente

¶ And wiþ þat' word sche gan the house to dighte
And tables for to sette and beddes make [leaf 142]
And peyned hire to do al þat' sche mighte
Preyinge þe chambereres for goddes sake
To hasten hem and faste swepe and schake
And sche þe moste ser*u*isable of' ālle
haþ eu*er*y chambre arrayed and' his halle

¶ Abouten vndren gan þis erl alighte
And wiþ him brought' his noble children tweye
ffor wiþ þe poeple ran to see þe sight'
Of' hire array so richely byseye
And þan at' erst' amonges hem þey seye
That' walter was no fool þough þat' him liste
To chaunge his wyf' for it' was for þe beste

¶ ffor sche is fairer as þey demen alle
þan is Grisilde and more tendre of' age
And fairer fruyt' betwen hem schulde falle
And more plesaunce for hire heih lynage
hire broþer eek' so fair was of' visage
That' hem to se þe poeple haþ cau3t' plesaunce
Co*m*mendynge now þe marquys gouernaunce

¶ O stormy poeple vnsad and euer vntrewe
Ay vndiscrete and chaungyng' as a fane
Delityng' ay in rombile þat' is newe
ffor lik' þe mone ay wexen 3e and wane

Ay ful of clappyng dere y-nough a Iane
3oure dome is fals 3our inconstance wel preueþ
A ful gret fool is he þat on 3ou leueþ

¶ Thus saiden sadde folk in þat Cite
Whan þat þe peple gazed vp and doun
ffor þey were glade right for þe nouelte
To han a newe lady of oure toun
No more of þis now make I mencioun
But to Grisilde anon wil I me dresse
And telle hire constaũce and hire besynesse

¶ fful besy was Grisilde in euery þing
That to þe feste was apertenent
Right nought was sche abayssht of hire cloþing [If 142, 5k]
þough it were rude and eek somdel torent
But with glad chere to þe gate is went
With oþer folk to grete þe marquysesse
And after þat doþ forþ hire besynesse

¶ Wiþ so glad chere his gestes sche resceyueþ
And connyngly euerich in his degre
That defaute no man apparceyueþ
But ay þey wondren what sche mighte be
þat in so pore array was for to se
And coude such honour & reuerence
And worþily þey preysen hire prudence

¶ In al þis mene while sche ne stente
þis mayde and eek hir broþer to comende
With alle hire herte in ful benigne entente
So wel þat no man couþe hire pris amende
But atte laste whan þise lordes wende
To sitte doun at mete he gan to calle
Grisilde as sche was besy in his halle

¶ Grisilde q*uod* he as it were in his play
how likeþ þe my wijf and hire beaute
Right wel q*uod* sche my lord for in good fey
A fairer sawe I neuer non þan sche
I pray to god 3if 3ou prosp*er*ite
And so hope I þat he wil to 3ou sende
Plesaunce ynow vnto 3our lyues ende

¶ O þing beseke I 3ou and warne also /
þat 3e prike wiþ no tormentynge
þis tendre mayden as 3e han do mo
ffor sche is fostred in hire norischinge
more tenderly and to my supposynge
Sche coude nought aduersite endure
As coude a pore fostred creature/

And whan þis walt*er* saugh hir pacience
hire glad cher and no malice at al
And he so often hadde don hire offence
And sche ay sadde and constant as a wal [leaf 143]
Continuyng euere hire Innocence oueral
This sturdy marquys gan hire herte dresse
To rewen on hire wyfly stedfastnesse

¶ This is ynough Grisilde myn q*uod* he
Be now no more agast ne yuel apayed
I haue þy feiþ and þi benignite
As wel as euer wo*m*man was assayed
In gret astate and pouereliche arrayed
Now knowe I deere wijf þy stedfastnesse /
And hire in armes toke and gan hire kesse

¶ And sche for wonder took of hit no keepe
Sche þou3te nought what þing he to hir sayde/
Sche ferde as sche hadde stirte out of hir slepe
Til sche out of hir masednesse abrayde

Grisilde q*uod* he god þat / for vs deyed
þou art' my wyf' ne non oþer I haue
Ne neuer hadde so god my soule saue 1064

¶ This is þy doughter which þou hast' supposed 1065
To be my wijf' þat' oþer feiþfully
Schal be myn [heir] as I haue ay purposed
þou bare him in þi body trewely 1068
At' boloygne haue I kept' hem pryuyly
Tak' hem aȝein for now mayst þou not seye
þat' þou hast' lorn non of' þy children tweye 1071

¶ And folk' þat' oþerwise han sayd of' me 1072
I warne hem wel þat' I haue don þis dede
ffor no malice ne for no cruelte
But' for tassaye in þe þy wommanhede 1075
And nat' to slee my children god forbede
But' for to kepe hem pryuyly and stille
Til I þi purpos knewe and al þy wille 1078

¶ Whan þis herde a swowne doun sche falleþ 1079
ffor pytous ioye and after hir swownynge
Sche boþe hire ȝonge children to hire calleþ
And in his armes pitously wepynge 1082
Embraceþ hem and tendrely kissinge [leaf 143, back]
fful like a moder wiþ hire salte teeres
Sche baþeþ boþe hire visage and hire heres 1085

¶ O which a pytous sight' it' was to see 1086
hir swownyng' and hire humble voys to heere
Graunt' mercy lord god I þanke it' ȝou q*uod* she
þat' ȝe han saued me my children deere 1089
now rekke I neuer to be ded right' heere
Siþþe I stonde in ȝour loue and in ȝour grace
No fors of' deþ ne whan my spirit' pace 1092

¶ O tendre o dere o ȝonge children myne 1093
ȝour woful moder wende stedefastly
That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
hadde eten ȝou but god of his mercy 1096
And ȝoure benigne fader tenderly
haþ don ȝou kepte and in þe same stounde
Al sodeinly sche swapte a doun to grounde 1099

¶ And in hire swowne so sadly holdeþ sche 1100
hire children tuo whan sche gan hem enbrace
þat with gret sleighte and wiþ gret difficulte
þe children from hire arm þei gon arace 1103
O many a teer on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem þat stooden hire besyde
vnneþe aboute hire mighten þey abyde 1106

Walter hir gladeþ and hir sorwe slakeþ 1107
Sche ryseþ vp abaysshed from hire traunce
And euery wight hire ioye and feste makeþ
til sche haþ caught ayein hir contenañce 1110
Walter hire doþ feiþfully plesaunce
þat it is deynte for to se þe cheere
Bitwixe hem tuo now þey ben mett in feere 1113

¶ This ladyes whan þat þey here tyme saye 1114
han taken hire and in to chambre goon
And streepen hire out of hire ruyde array
And in a cloþ of gold þat brighte schoon 1117
Wiþ a coroune of many a riche stoon
vppon hire heed þey in to halle hir broughte [leaf 141]
And þan sche was honoured as sche oughte 1120

¶ Thus haþ þis pitous day a blisful ende 1121
ffor euery man and wo*m*man doþ here might
This day in mirþe and reuel to dispende
Til on þe welken schone þe sterres bright 1124

ffor more solempne in eu*er*y ma*n*nes sight'
þis feste was and gretter of' costage
Than was þe reuel of' hire mariage 1127

¶ fful many a ȝeer in hih p*ro*sp*er*ite 1128
lyuen þise tuo in concord and in reste
And richely his douȝt*er* maryed he
vnto a lord on of' þe worþieste 1131
Of' all*e* ytayle þanne and pes & reste
his wyues fader in his court' he kepeþ
Til þat' his soule out' of' his body creepeþ 1134

¶ his sone succediþ in his heritage 1135
In reste and pees aft*er* his fader day
And fortunat' eek' was in mariage
Al putte he not' his wijf' in gret' assay 1138
This world is not' so strong' it' is no nay
As it' haþ ben in olde tyme ȝore
And herkneþ what' þis auctor seiþ þ*er*fore 1141

This story is sayd not' for þat' wyues scholde 1142
ffolwen grisilde as in humilite
ffor it' were importable þough þey wolde
But' for þat' eu*er*y wight' in his degre 1145
Schulde be constante in aduersite
As was Grisilde þerfore Petrayke writeþ
þis story which he wiþ his stile enditeþ 1148

ffor siþþe a wo*m*man was so paciente 1149
vnto a mortel man wel more vs ouȝte
Resceyuen al in gree þat' god vs sente
ffor grete skiles he preeueþ þat' he wrouȝte 1152
But' he ne tempteþ no man þat' he brouȝte
As seiþ seint' Iame ȝif' ȝe his pistil rede
He preueþ folk' alday it is no drede [leaf 144, back] 1155

And suffreþ vs as for oure excercise
Wiþ scharpe scorges of aduersite
fful often to ben betyn in sondry wyse
Nought for to knowe oure wille for certes he
Or we were born knew al oure frelete
And for oure beste is al oure gouernañce
lat vs þanne lyue in vertuous suffraunce

¶ But lordinges o word herkeneþ ar I go
It were ful hard to fynde now a dayes
In alle a toun Grisildes þre or tuo
ffor if þat þey were putte to suche assayes
The golde of hem haþ now so badde layes
Wiþ bras þat þoughꝫ þe coyne be fayr at eye
It wolde raþer berst/ a tuo þan plye

¶ ffor which here for þe wyues loue of Baþe
Whos lijf and al hire helþe god mayntene
In hire maystrye and elles were it skaþe
I wolde wiþ lusty herte freisshe and grene
Sey 3ou a song to glade 3ou I wene
And late vs stynte of ernestful matiere
herkneþ my song þat seiþ in þis manere

¶ lenvoye de Chaucere

¶ Grisild is deed and eek hir pacience
And boþe at oones buryed in ytayle
Wher fore I crye in open audience
No wedded man be hardy to assayle /
his wyues pacience in hope to fynde /
Grisildis for in certes he schal fayle /

O noble wyues ful of' heih prudence
lat' non humilite ȝoure tonge nayle /
Ne lat' no clerk' haue cause or diligence 118
To write of' ȝou a story of' such meruayle
As Grisildis pacient' and kynde
lest' chychevache ȝow swolwe in hire entrayle 1188

ffolweþ herto and holdeþ no scilence [a leaf out]
[but eu*er*e answerith̄ / in the contir-taill*e* [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 82]
beth̄ nat bidaffid / for youre innocence 1191
but sharply take on yow / the gou*er*naill*e*
enpoynteth̄ wel this lessou*n* / in youre mynde
for comune p*ro*fit / sith hit may availl*e* 1194

And ye Archiwivis / stondith̄ at defence
syn ye be stronge / as is a grete Camaill*e*
ne suffrith̄ not / that men do yow offence 1197
and slender wivis / as feble in bataill*e*
beith̄ egre as a Tigre / bi-yende the se fer in ynde
ay clappith̄ as a mylle / I yow consaill*e* 1200

Ne dredith̄ hem nough̄t doith̄ hem no reu*er*ence
for though thyn housbond armed be / in maill*e*
the wordis of thi crabbed eloquence 1203
shal persshe his breste / *and* eke his auentaill*e*
in gelousie I rede eke / thow him bynde
and thow shalt make him covche / as a quaill*e* 1206

Yf thow be feyre / there folk ben in p*re*sence
shewe thow thi visage / *and* thin apparaill*e*
yf thow be foule / be fre of thi dispence 1209
to gete the frendis / ay do thi travaill*e*
be eu*er* of chere as ligh̄t / as leff on lynde
and lete him care · wepe / wrynge *and* waill*e* 1212

Here endith̄ the Clerke of Oxonford
his tale /]

CORPUS 320 (6-T. 441) [this page, Arch. Seld. B. 14]

[and next folwiṫ his tale of Ianu*ar*e and May. [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]

Whilom ther was dwellyng / in Lumbardye
a worthi knyght / that borne was in Pavie
in which he lived / in grete prosp*er*ite
and sexti yere / a wiffles man was he
and folwed ay / his bodyly delite
on women / there as was his appetite
as don these foolis / that ben seculere
and whan he was passed sexti yere
were hit for holynes / or for dotage
I can not sey / but suche a grete corage
had this knyght / to be a wedded man
that day *and* night / he doth al that he can
to espien where he myghte / wedded be
prayng oure lord / graunte him that he
myghte onys knowe / of that blisful liff
that is bitwixe an housbonde / *and* his wiff
and for to live / vnder that holy bonde
with which first / god man *and* woman bonde
noon other liff seide he / is worthe a bene
for wedlok is so esy / *and* so clene
that in this world / hit is a p*ar*adise
thus seide this olde knyght / that was so wise
and c*er*teynly / as soth as god is kynge
to take a wiff / hit is a glorious thinge
and namely whan a man is olde / *and* hore
than is a wiff the fructe / of his tresore
than shulde he take a yonge wiff / *and* a feyre. [*leaf* 115, *back*]
on which he myghte / engender him an heyre

and lede his liff in ioyé / *and* in solas [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
where that these bachelers / synge alas
whan that thei fynden / any adu*er*site
in love / which nys but childis vanyte 1276
and trewely hit sit wel / to be so
that bachelers han ofte peyne *and* wo
on brotil gronde thei bilde / *and* brotilnes
they fynden / whan thei wenyn sikernes 1280
thei live but as a brid / or as a beste
in liberte / *and* vnder noon a-reste
there as a wedded man / in his estate
liviñ a liff blisful / *and* ordynate 1284
vnder the yoke of mariage I-bounde
wel may his herte / in ioye *and* blis habounde
for who can be so boxom / as a wiff
who is so trewe / *and* eke so ententiff 1288
to kepe him sike *and* hole / as his make
for wel or wo / she wol him not forsake
she is not wery / him to loue *and* se*r*ue
thoughñ that he lye bedred / til he sterve] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract ends*]
And ȝitꝰ some clerkes seyn itꝰ nys nouȝt so [Corpus MS, leaf 145]
Ofꝰ which Theoffraste / is on ofꝰ þo
Whatꝰ fors þeiȝ theofraste luste lye
Ne take no wijfꝰ q*uod* he for husbandrye 1296
As for to spare in housholde þin dispence
A trewe seru*aun*t doþ more diligence
þy good to kepe þan þin owen wijfꝰ
ffor sche wol clayme halfꝰ partꝰ al hire lijfꝰ 1300
And ifꝰ þatꝰ þou be seekꝰ so god me saue
þy verray frendes oþer a trewe knaue
Wol kepe þe betꝰ þan sche þatꝰ wayteþ ay
After þy good and haþ don many a day 1304
[and if thow take a wiff / in thin age oolde
fful lighñtly maist thow be a Cokewoolde] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
To þis entente and an C siþes wurse 1307
[writeth̃ this man / there / god his bonys cors] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]

But tak no kepe of alle such vanyte
Defye theofrast and herkne me
A wyff is goddes ȝifte verrayly
Alle oþer maner ȝiftes hardily
As landes rentes pasture or comune
Oþer oþer ȝiftes þat moebles of fortune
þat passen as a schadewe on a wall
But drede nought if pleynly speke I schall
A wyf wil laste and in þin hous endure
Wel lenger þan þe luste to endure
mariage is a ful gret sacrament
he which haþ no wijf I holde him schent
he lyueþ helples and is al desolat
I speke of folk in seculer estat
And herkne why I say nouȝt þis for nouȝt
þe wo*m*man is for mannes help y-wrouȝt
þe hihe god when he hadde ad*a*m maked
And sawe him allone bely naked
God of his grete goodnesse sayde he þanne
lete vs now make an helpe to þis manne
ylike to himself and þen he made Eue
here may ȝe se and here-by ȝe preue
That wijf is mannes helpe and his comfort
his paradis terreste and his disport [leaf 145, back]
So buxom and so v*er*tuous is sche
þey mosten needes lyue in vnite
Of fleisshe þei ben and O fleisch as I gesse
nouȝt but on herte in wele and in distresse
A wyf! A seinte mary b*e*nedicite
how might a man han any adu*er*site
þat haþ a wyf certes I can nouȝt say
þe blisse þat is bitwexe hem tway
þer may no tonge telle or herte þynke
If he be pore sche helpeþ him to swynke
Sche keepiþ his good and wasteþ neuer a del
And al þat hire housband lust hir likeþ wel

Sche saiþ nouȝt' ones nay whan he saiþ ȝe.
Do þis saiþ he al redy sire seyþ sche
O blisful ordre O wedlok' precious
þou art' so mery and eek' so vertuous. 1348.
And so comended and aproued eke
That' euery man þat' halt/ him worþ a leek'
vpon his bare knees aught' al his lijf'
þanken his god þat' him haþ sent' a wyf'. 1352
Oþer preyed god him for to sende
A wijf' to laste vnto his lyues ende
ffor þanne his lijf' is sett' in sikernesse
he may nouȝt' be desceyued as I gesse 1356
So þat' he werche after his wyues reed
þanne may he boldely beren vp his heed
þey ben so trewe and so wys
ffor which if' þou wolt' worchen as þe wyse 1360
Do alway so as þe womman wol þe rede.
lo how þat' Iacob as þise clerkes rede
By good counseil of' his moder rebekke
Band þe kydes skyn abouten his nekke 1364
ffor which his fadres benysoñ he wan
lo Iudith as þe story eek' telle can
By wys counseil sche goddes poeple kepte
And slough̄ him Olophinus whiles he slepte [leaf 146] 1368.
Lo how Abygayle by good counseil how þat' sche
Saued hire housbonde Nabal whan þat' he
Schulde han be slayn and loke after also
By good counseil delyuered out' of' wo 1372
The poeple of' god and made him mardoche
Of' Assuer enchaunced for to be
Ther is no þing' gree superlatiff
As seiþ Senek' aboue an humble wyf' 1376
Suffre þyn wyues tonge as Catoun byt.
Sche schal comaunde and þou schalt' suffre yt'
And ȝit' sche wolde obeye of' curtesye
A wyf' is kepere of' þin housbondrye 1380

Wel may þe seeke man bewayle and wepe /
Ther as þer nys no wijf' þe hous to keepe
I warne þe if' wysly þou wilt' wirche
loue wel þy wyf' as crist' loueþ his chirche
If' þou loue þy self' þou louest' þy wyf'
No man hateþ his flesch̄ but' in his lyf'
he fostreþ it/ and þerfore byd I þe
Cherissche þy wijf' or þou schalt' neuer þe
housbond & wijf' what' so men Iape or pleye
Of' worldly folk' holde þe righte weye
þey ben so knyt' þer may non harm betyde
And namely vpon þe wyues syde
ffor which þis Ianuarye of' which I tolde
Considereþ haþ in wiþ his dayes olde
þe lusty þe vertuous quyete
þat' is in mariage hony swete
And for his frendes on a day sent'
To telle hem þeffect' of' his entent
Wiþ face sadde he haþ hem þis tale tolde
he sayde frendes I am hoor and olde
And almost' god wot' at' my pittis brinke
vpon my sowle somwhat' most' I þinke
I haue my body folyly dispended
y-blessed be god þat' it schal ben amended [leaf 146, back]
ffor I wol be certein a wedded man
And þat' in alle þe haste þat' I can
vnto som mayde fayr and tendre of' age
I pray you schapeþ for my mariage
Al sodeinly for I wol nouȝt' abyde
And I wole fonde aspye on my syde
To whom I may be wedded hastely
But' for as moche þat' ȝe ben mo þen I
ȝe schullen raþer such a þing' aspyen
þan I and wher me luste best' allyen
But' o þing' warne I ȝou my frendes deere
I wol non old wyf' haue in no manere /

She schal nou3t passe xvj 3er certayn
Old fleissh and 3ong fleissh þat wolde I han ful fayn
Bet is q*uod* he a pyk þan a pykrelle
And bet þan olde beef is þe tendre feelle
I wol no wo*m*man xxti 3er of age
It nys but benestraw and gret forage
And eek þis olde wydewes god it woot
þey konne so moche craft on wades boot
So mochil broken harme whan þat hem liste
þat wiþ hem schulde I neuer lyuen in reste
ffor sondry scoles makeþ subtile clerkys
Wo*m*men of many a scole half a clerk is
But certeinly a 3ong þing may me gye
Right as men may warm wax wiþ handes to-plye
þerfore I sey 3ow pleinly in a clause
I wol non old wijf haue for þis cause
ffor if so were if I hadde so myschaunce
That I in hire ne couþe han no plesaunce
þenne scholde I lede my lijf in aduoutrye
And so streyt to þe deuyl whan I dye
Ne children schulde I non vpon hire geten
3it were me leuer houndes hadde me eten
þan þat myn heritage scholde falle
In str*a*unge hande and þus I telle 3ou alle [leaf 147]
I dowte nought I wot þe cause why
men schulde wedde and for*þer*more wot I
þer speke þ many men of mariage
þat wot nomore of hit þen wot my page
ffor whiche causes men schulde take a wyf
If he may not chaste be by his lijf
Tak him a wijf wiþ gret deuocioun
By cause of leofful *pro*creacioñ
Of children to þe hono*ur* of god aboue
And nought only for p*ar*amo*ur* and for loue
And for þei schulden leccherie eschue
And 3elde here dette whil þat it is newe

Or for þat' ilke man schulde helpe oþer
In meschief' as a soster schal do a broþer
And lyue in chastite ful heuenly
But' sires by 3our leue þat' am not' I
ffor [god] be þanked I dar make auaunt'
I feele my lemes starke and suffisaunt'
To don al þat' a man bilongeþ to do
I wot' my seluen best' what' I may do
þoughⁿ I be hoor and fare / as doþ a træ
þat' blosmeth er þat' fruyt' y-waxe be
A blossemed tree nys neyþer druye ne deed
I feele me no wher hoor but' on myn heed
Myn herte and myn lymes ben as greene
As laurere þat' purghⁿ þe 3er is seene
And seþenes 3e han herd al myn entent
I pray 3ou to my wille þat' 3e assent'
Dyuerse men dyuersely him tolde
Of' mariages many ensamples olde
Some blamed it' some preysed it' certein
But' atte laste schortly for to seyn
As alday falleþ altercacioⁿ
Bitwixe frendes in disputacioⁿ
þer fel a stryf' betwixe his breþeren tuo
Of' which' þat on was cleped Placebo [leaf 147, back]
Placebo seyde o Ianuare broþer
To 3ou telle I þis tale and to non oþer
fful litel need hadde 3e my lord so deere /
Counseil to aske of' any þat' is heere
But' þat' 3e be on so ful of' sapience
þat' 3ou ne likeþ for 3our heighⁿ prudence
To weyue fro þe word of' Salomon
This word sayde he vnto vs euerychon
Wirke alle þing' by counseil þus seyde he
And þanne schalt' þou nou3t' repente þe
But' þoughⁿ þat' Salomon speke such a word
myn owen deere brother and my lord

So wisly god my soule bringe at reste
I halde 3oure owne counseil for þe beste
ffor broþer myn of me take þis motyf
I haue now ben a court man al my lyf
And 3it god wot þough I vnworþy be
I haue standen in ful gret degre
Abouten lordes in ful gret estate
3it hadde I neuer wiþ non of hem debate
I neuer hem contraried trewely
I wot wel þat my lord can more þan I
What þat he saiþ I halde it ferme & stable
I saye þe same or oþer þing semblable
A ful gret fool is eny counseilour
þat serueþ eny lord of heih honour
þat dar presume or ones þenken it/
þat his counseil schulde passe his lordes witt
Nay lordes ben no fooles by my fay
3e haue 3oure self spoken here to day
So heih sentence so holy and so wel
That I consente and conferme euery del
3oure wordes alle and 3oure opynioun
By god þer nys no man in al þis toun
Ne in ytaille couþe bet han sayd
Crist haldeþ him of þis ful wel a-payd [leaf 148]
And trewely it is an heih corage
Of eny man þat stopen is in age
To take a 3ong wyf by my fader kyn
3oure herte hangeþ vpon a Ioly pyn
Doþ now in þis matier right as 3ou leste
ffor fynally I halde it for þe beste
¶ Iustynus þat ay stille sat and herde
he right on þis wise to Placebo answerde
Now broþer myn be pacient I preye
Siþenes 3e han sayd and herkneþ what I seye
Senek amonges oþer wordes wyse
Seiþ þat a man him oughte right wel auyse

To whom he ȝeuyþ his lond oþer his catel
And seþenes I aught/ auyse me rightꝰ wel
To whom I ȝiue my good awey fro me
Wel more I auȝte to auȝse me
To whom I ȝiue my body for alwey
I warne ȝou wel itꝰ nys no childes pley
To take a wijfꝰ wiþoute auysementꝰ
Men moste enquere þis is myn assentꝰ
Wheþer shē be wys or sobre or drunkelewe
Oþer proude oþer oþerwey a schrewe
A chydester or a wastour ofꝰ þy good
Oþir riche or pore or ofꝰ maneres wood
Al be itꝰ so þatꝰ no man fynde schal
None in þis worlde þatꝰ trottiþ hool in al
Ne man ne beeste suche as men conne deuyse
Butꝰ naþeles it auȝtꝰ ynoughꝫ suffise
Wiþ any wijfꝰ ifꝰ þatꝰ so were sche hadde
mo goode þewes þan hire vices badde
And al þis askeþ leiser for to enquere /
ffor god itꝰ wootꝰ I haue wepte many a teere
fful priuyly siþ þatꝰ I hadde a wyfꝰ
Preyse who so wole a wedded mannes lijfꝰ
Certayn I fynde in hitꝰ but coste and care
And obseruauncesꝰ of alle blisses bare [leaf 148, back]
And ȝitꝰ god wotꝰ my neyghebur aboute
And namely ofꝰ wommen many a rowte
Sayn þatꝰ I haue þe moste stedefastꝰ wijfꝰ
And eekꝰ þe meekestꝰ oon þatꝰ bereþ lijfꝰ
Butꝰ I wotꝰ bestꝰ wher wryngeþ me my scho
ȝe may for me rightꝰ as ȝou likeþ do
Auyseþ ȝou ȝe ben a man ofꝰ age
how þatꝰ ȝe entren in to mariage
And namely wiþ a ȝongꝰ wijfꝰ and a fayr
By him þatꝰ made water erþe and ayr
þe ȝongest man þatꝰ is in al þis route
Is besy ynoughꝫ to bringen itꝰ aboute

To han his wijf allone trusteþ to me
3e schulle nou3t plesen hire oonly 3eres þre
þis is to seyn to don hire plesaunce
A wijf axeþ ful many an obseruaunce
I pray 3ou þat 3e ne ben euyl payed
Wel quod þis Ianuare and hast þou al sayd
Straw for þyn Senek and for þy prouerbis
I counte nought a paner ful of herbes
Of scole termes wiser men þan þou
And þou hast herde assenteden right now /
To my purpos Placebo what say 3e
I say it is a cursed man quod he
þat letteþ matrimonye sikerly
And wiþ þat word þay rysen sodeinly
And ben assented fully þat he scholde
Be weddid whan him luste and whan he wolde
þe fantasye and þe besy curiousnesse
ffro day to day gan in þe soule impresse /
Of Ianuare aboute his mariage /
many fayr schapp and many fayr visage /
þer passeþ þorgh his herte night be night
As whos took a myrour polisshed bright
And sette it in a comune market place
þenne scholde he se many a figure pace [leaf 149]
By his myrour and in þe same wise
Gan Ianuare in wiþ his þou3t deuyse
Of maydenes whiche þat dwelte besyde
he wiste nought wher he might abyde
ffor þou3 þat oon haþ beaute in hire face /
Anoþer stant so in þe poeples grace /
ffor hire sadnes and hire benignite
þat of þe poeple grettest voys hadde sche
And some were riche and hadde badde name
but naþeles bitwixe ernest and game
he atte laste appoynted him on oon
And leet alle oþer fro his herte gon

And ches hir of' his owen auctorite
ffor loue is blynd alday and may not' se
And whan þat' he was in þe bed y-brought'
hè purtreyed in his herte and in his þought' 1600
hire freisshe beaute / and hir age tender
hire myddel smal and hir armes long' and sklender
hire wise gou*er*naunce and hire grete gentilnes
hir wo*m*manly berynge and hire sadnes 1604
And whan þat' he was fro hire condescended
him þouȝte his þouȝt' might' nouȝt' ben amended
ffor whan þat' he himself' concluded hadde
him þouȝt' euer oþer mannes witte so badde 1608
þat' inpossible it were to replye
aȝein his choys þis was his fantasye
his frendes sent' he to at' his instance
And preyed hem to don him þat' plesaunce 1612
þat' hastely þey wolden don him come /
he wolde abregge here labour alle and some
Needeþ nomore for him to goon or ryde
he was apoynted þer he wolde abyde 1616
Placebo cam and eek' his freendes sone
And alþer first' he bad hem alle a bone
þat' non of' hem non argumentes make
Aȝeins þe purpos which þat' he haþ take [leaf 149, back]
Which purpos was plesaunt/ to god sayde he
And verray ground of' his *prosperite*
he sayde þer was a mayden in þe toun
Which þat' of' beaute hadde gret' renoun 1624
Al were it' so sche were of' smal degre
Sufficeþ him hire ȝouþe and hire beaute
Which mayde he seyde schulde ben his wiff'
To lede in ese and holynesse his lijf' 1628
And þanked god þat' he might' han hire al
þat' no wight' wiþ his blisse parten schal
And preyed hem to laboure in þis neede /
And schaped þat' he fayled not' to spede 1632

ffor þanne he seyde his spirit' was at' eese
þen is q*uod* he no þing' may me displese /
Saue o þing' prikeþ in my conscience
þe which I wol reherse in ȝoure presence / 1636
I haue q*uod* he herd seyd ful ȝore ago
þer may no man han parfyt' blisses tuo
þis is to say in erþe and eek' in heuene
ffor þey he kepte him fro þe synnes seuene 1640
And eek' for eu*e*ry braunche of' þilke tre
ȝit' is þer so parfit' p*rosperite*
And so gret' ese and lust' in mariage
þat' euer I am agast' now in myn age 1644
þat' I schal lede now so mery a lijf'
[so delicate withouten wo / or striff [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14; *no gap in Corpus.*]
that I shal haue myn heuen / in erthe] heere
ffor siþenes þat verray heuene is bought' so deere 1648
Wiþ tribulacioñ and gret' penaunce
how scholde I lyue in such plesaunce
As alle wedded men doþ wiþ here wyues /
Come to þe blisse þer crist' eterne on lyue is 1652
þis is my drede and ȝit' myn bre*þer*en tweye
Assoylleþ me þis questioñ I ȝou p*rey*e
Iustynus which þat' hated his folye
Answeryng' anon riȝt' in his Iap*er*e 1656
And for he wolde his longe tale abregge
he wolde non auctorite alegge [leaf 150]
But' seyde sire so þer be non obstacle
Oþer þan þis god of' his heih miracle 1660
And of' his mercy may so for ȝou wirche
þat' er ȝe han ȝour ȝiftes of holy chirche
ȝe may repente of' wedded mannes lijf'
In which ye sayn þer is neiþer woo ne strijf' 1664
And elles god forbede but' if' he sente
A wedded man grace to repente
Wel often raþer þan a sengil man
And þerfore sire þe beste reed I can 1668

Dispeyreþ 3ou nou3t' haueþ in memory
*Par*aunter sche may be 3our purgatory
Sche may be goddes mene and goddes whippe
þan schal 3our soule vp to heuene skippe 1672
Swifter þan doþ an arwe out' of' a bowe
I hope to god her-after schalt' þou knowe
þat' þer nys non so gret' felicite
In mariage ne neuer more schal be 1676
þat' 3ou schal lakke of' 3our saluacioñ
So þat' 3e vse as skile is and resoun
þe lustes of' 3our wijf' attemp*e*relly
And þat' 3e plese hir nou3t' to amerously 1680
And þat' 3e kepe 3ou eek' fro oþer synne /
Myn tale is doon for my witte is þinne
Beþ nou3t' agast' here-of' my broþer
But' let' vs wade fro þis mater to anoþer 1684.
þe wijf' of' Bathe if' 3e han vnderstonde
Of' mariage which 3e han on honde
Declared haþ ful wel in litel space
ffareþ now wel god haue 3ou in his *grace* 1688
And wiþ þis word þis Iustyne and his broþer
han take here leue and ilke of' hem of' oþer
ffor whan þey sawe it' moste needes be
þey wrou3ten so by wys and sleigñ trete 1692
þat' sche þis mayden which þat' mayus higñt'
As hastely as euer þat' sche migñt' [leaf 150, back]
Schal wedded be vnto Ianuarie /
It' trowe it' were to long' 3ou to tarie 1696
If' I 3ou tolde of' euery scryt' or band
By which þat' sche was feffed in his land
Oþer for to herken of' hire riche aray
But fynally y-comen is þis day 1700
That to þe chirche boþe ben þey went'
ffor to resceyue þe holy sacrament
fforþ comþ þe prest' wiþ stole aboute his nekke /
And bad hire be ylike Sarra and Rebekke 1704

In wisdom and trouþe of mariage
And sayde his orisouns as is his vsage
And crouched hem and bad god schulde hem blesse
And made al siker ynough with holynesse /
þus ben þey weddid with solempnite
And atte feste sitteþ he and sche
Wiþ oþer worþy folk vpon þe deys
Al ful of ioye and blisse is þe paleys
And ful of instrumentz and of vitayle
þe moste deyntevous of alle ytayle
Byforn hem of instrumentz which a soun
That Orpheus ne of Phebes ampheoun
Ne maden neuer such a melodye
And at euery cours cam lowde menstralcie
þat neuer Ioab trumped for to heere /
Neiþer Theodomas 3it half so cleere
And Thebes whan þe cite was in doute /
Bacus þe wyn hem schenkeþ al aboute
And venus lawheþ vpon euery wight
ffor Ianuarye was bycome here knight
And wolde boþe assayen his corage
In liberte and eek in mariage
And wiþ hir fyr brond wiþ hire hand aboute
Daunsiþ byforn þe bryde al aboute
And certeynly I dar wel seyn ri3t þis
Emyneus þat god of weddyng is [leaf 151]
Sawe neuer in his lijf so mery a wedded man
halde þou þy pes þou poete Marcean
þat writest vs þat ilke weddyng mery
Of hire phylologie and of mercurye
And of þe sanges þat þe muses song
So smale as eek þin penne and eek þy tong
ffor to discryuen of þis mariage
When tendre 3ouþe haþ wedded stowpyng age
þer is such myrþe þat it may nou3t be write
Assayeþ it 3ou self þen may 3e wite /

If þat I lakke or non in þis matere
Mayus þat sitt wiþ so benigne a cheere
hire to beholde it semed fayerye
Queene Ester loked neuer wiþ such an yhe 1744
On assuer so meke a look haþ sche
I may 3ou nou3t deuyse al hire beaute
But þus moche of hir beaute telle I may
þat sche was like þe brighte morwe of may 1748
ffulfilde of beaute and of plesaunce
þis Ianuarye is rauyssht in a traunce
And at euery tyme he loked on hire face /
But in his herte he gan hire to manace 1752
þat he þat nigħt in armes wolde hir streyne
harder þan euyr parys did Eleyne
But naþeles 3it had he gret pite
þat þilke night offenden hire moste he 1756
And þou3t allas O tender creature
Now wolde god 3e mighte wel endure
Al my corrage / it is so scharpe and kene
I am agast 3e schullen it nat sustene 1760
But god forbede þat I did al my myght
Now wolde god þat it were waxen nyght
And þat þe night wolde lasten euermo
I wolde þat al þis poeple were a go 1764
And finally he doþ alle his labour
As he best mighte sauynge his honour [leaf 151, back]
To hasten hem fro þe mete in subtil wise
þe tyme came þat resoun was to ryse 1768
And after þat men daunce and drynke faste
And spices al aboute þe hous þay caste
And ful of ioye and blisse is euery man
Al but a squyer þat highte damyan 1772
Which karf byforn þe knight many a day
he was so rauysshed on his lady may
That for þe verray peyne he was ney3 wood
Almost he swelt and swowned þer he stood 1776

As þat' sche bare daunsyng' in hir hand
So freisshe sche was and þerto so likand [spurious]
And to his bed he went' him hastily
Nomore of' him at' þis tyme speke I
But' þere I lete him weepe ynough and pleyne
Till freissche may wil rewen on his peyne
¶ O perilous fyr þat' in þe bedstraw bredi þ
O famuler foo þat' his seruise beedi þ
O seruañt' traytour fals holy hewe
I-like to þe neddre sley3 and in Bosom vntrewe
God schilde vs alle fro 3oure iniquitance
O Ianuare drunken in plesaunce
O mariage see how þine Damyan
þin oughne squyer and þyn borne man
Entendi þ to do þe vylenye
God graunte þe þin harmly foo to aspye
ffor in þis world nys worse pestylence
Than homly foo alday in þy presence
Parfourmed ha þ þis deuyn day his ark' dyurne
No lenger may þe body of' him soiourne
The Orisowte as in þat' latitude
Night' wi þ his mantel þat' is so derk' & rude
Gan for to sprede þe mysperye aboute
ffor which departed is þe lusty route
ffor Ianuare wi þ þank' on euery syde
home to here houses lustily þei ryde / [leaf 152]
þer as þey don here þinges as hem leste
And whanne þay seye her tyme gon to reste
Sone after þat' þis hastyf' Ianuare
Wol go to bedde he wol no lengere care
he drynke þ ypocras clarre and vernage
Of' spices hote to encresen his corage
And many a letuare hadde he ful fyn
Suche as þe cursed monk' daun Constantyn
ha þ writen in his book' of' coytu
To eten hem alle he nas no þing' eschewe

And þus to his þriue freendes seyde he
ffor goddes loue as sone as it may be
let voyden alle þis hous in curteys wyse soone 1815
Men drunken and þe trauers drowe anone 1817
The bryde was brouȝt to bedde as stille as stoon 1818
So hastede Ianuer it moste be doon [*spurious*]
And whan þe bed was wiþ þe prest y-blessed
Out of þe chambre haþ euery wight him dressed 1820
And Ianuare haþ faste in armes take
his freissche may his paradys his make
he lulliþ hire he kisseþ hire ful ofte
Wiþ þikke brystles of his berd vnsofte 1824
Ylike to þe skyn of an houndfissh scharp as brere
ffor he was schaue al newe in his manere
he rubbeþ hire vpon hire tendre face
And sayde þus allas I mot trespace 1828
To ȝou my spouse and ȝou gretly offende
Or tyme come þat I wol doun descende
But naþeles considereþ þis *quod* he
þis nys no werkman what so euer he be 1832
þat may boþe wirche wel and hastely
þis wol be don at leyser parfitly
It is no force how longe þat we pleye
I trowe in wedlok coupled be we tweye 1836
And y-blessed be þe ȝok þat we ben Inne
ffor in oure actis we may do no synne / [leaf 152, back]
A man may do no synne wiþ his wijf
Ne hurte himselue wiþ his owene knyf 1840
Now we han leue to pleye vs by þe lawe
Thus laboureþ he til þat þe day gan dawe
And þenne he takeþ a soppe in fyn clarre
And vpright in his bedde þanne sitteþ he / 1844
And after þat he sang ful lowde and cleere
And kissed his wijf and made wantoun cheere
he was al coltissch and ful of ragerie
And ful of Girgoun as is a flekked pye / 1848

þe slakke skyn aboute his nekke schakeþ
Whil þat he sang so chauunteþ he and crakeþ /
But god wot what may þou3te in hire herte /
Whan sche him saugh vp sittyng in his scherte
In his night cappe and wiþ his nekke lene /
Sche preyseþ nou3t his pleying worþ a bene
þenne seyde he þus my restyng wol I take
Now day is come I may no leṅger wake
And doun he leyd his heed and sleep til prime
And aftirward whan þat he saugh his tyme
vp ryseþ Ianuare but/ freissche may
holt hire chambre vnto þe ferþe day
As vsage is of wyues for þe beste /
ffor euery labour som tyme mot haue reste
Oþer elles longe may he nou3t endure
þis is to say no lyues creature
Be it of fissh or brid or best or man
Now wol I speke of woful dauyan
þat langureþ for loue as 3e schullen heere
þerfore I speke to him in þis manere
I say O sely Damyan allas
Answere to þis demaunde as in þis cas
how schalt þou þy lady freisshe may
Telle þy wo sche wole alway say nay
Eke if þou speke sche wole þy wo bewreye
God be þin helpe I can no bettre seye [leaf 153]
þis sike damyan in venus fyre
So brenneþ þat he deyeþ for desire
ffor which he putte his liff/ in aduenture
No lenger might he in þis wise endure
But priuyly a penner gan he borwe
And in a *lettre* wrot he alle his sorwe
In maner of a complaynt oþer a lay
vnto þis fair and freissche lady may
And in a purs of silk heng on his scherte
he haþ y-put and leyd it/ at his herte/

þe more þat' at' noon' was þilke day
That' Ianuare haþ wedded þat' freissche may
In tuo of' Taure was in þe Cancre Gliden
So longe haþ sche in hire chambre abyden
As costume is vnto þise noblis alle
A bryde schal nouȝt' eten in þe halle
Til dayes foure oþer þre dayes atte leste
y-passed ben þen lat' hire go to feste
þe ferþe day complet' froo noon to noon
Whan þat' þe hihe masse was y-doon
In halle sitt' þis Ianuare and may
As freissh as is þe brighte someres day
And so bifelle how þat' þis goode man
Remembreþ him vpon þis damyan
And sayde seinte mary how may þis be
That' Damyan entendiþ nouȝt' to me
Is he ay sike or how may þis betyde
his squyers whiche þat' stooden him besyde
Excusynge him be cause of' his seknesse
Which letted him to don his busynesse
Non oþer cause mighte make him care
That' me forþinkeþ quod þis Ianuare
he is a gentil squyer by my trouþe /
If' þat' he deyde it were harm and rouþe
he is as wys discrete and secre
As eny man I wot' of' his degre [leaf 153, back
And þerto manly and eek' seruisable
And for to ben a þrifty man right' able
But' after mete as sone as euer I may
I wole my self' visite him and eek' may
To don him al þe confort' þat' I can
And for þat' word him blessed *euery* man
That' of' his bounte and of' his gentilnesse
He wolde so conforten him in his siknesse
His squyer for it' was a gentil dede
Dame *quod* he þis Ianuar take good hede

That' at' after mete ȝe wiþ ȝour wo*mm*en alle
Whan ȝe han ben in chambre out' of' þis halle
That' alle ȝe gon to se þis Damyan
Doþ him disport' he is a gentil man
And telleþ him þat I wil him visite
haue I no þing' but rested me a lite
[and spede yow faste / for I wol abide
til that ye slepe / right bi my side] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
Now wiþ þat' worde he gan to him calle
A squyer þat' was marschal of' his halle
And tolde him certeyn þinges what' he wolde
This freisshe may haþ streyt' hir weye holde
Wiþ alle hire wo*mm*en vnto þis damyan
Doun by his beddes syde sat' sche þan
Confortyng' him as goodly as sche may
This damyan whan he his tyme say
In secret' wise his purs and eek' his bille
In which þat' he writen hadde his wille
haþ putte in to hire hond wiþouten more
Saue þat' he siked wonder sore
And softely to hire right þus sayde he
mercy and þat' ȝe discouereþ nouȝt' me
ffor I am ded if' þat' þis þing' be kyd
This purs haþ sche wiþinne hir bosme hid
And went' hir way ȝe gete nomore of' me
But' vnto Ianure y-comen is sche
And on his beddes syde sitte ful softe
He takeþ hire and kisseþ hire ful ofte [lea 154]
And leyde him doun to slepe and þat' anon
Sche feyned hire as þat' sche moste gon
þer as ȝe woot' þat' euery wight' mot' needе
And when sche of' þis bille haþ taken heede
Sche rent' it al to cloutes at' þe laste
And in þe pryue softely sche it caste
Who studieþ now but' fayre freissche may
And a doun by Ianuer sche lay

That' sleep til þat' þe coughe him haþ awaked
Anon he preyed hir to strepen hire al naked
he wolde of' hire he sayde of' hire haue som plesaunce
he seyde hire cloþes dide him encombraunce
And sche obeyeþ be he leef' or loþ
But' lest' þat' precious folk' be wiþ me wroþ
how þat' he wrouȝte I dar to ȝou nouȝt' telle
Oþer whether þat' he þouȝt on *par*adys oþer of' helle
But' I lete hem worchen in here wise
Til euesong' rynge and þat' þey moste aryse /
Were it' by destyne oþir by auenture
Were it' by influence or by nature
Oþer in constillac*i*on þat' in such estat
The heuene stood þat' tyme fortunat
Was for to putte a bille of' venus werkis
ffor alle þing' haþ tyme as seyn þise clerkis
To any wo*m*man for to gete hir loue
I can nouȝt' say but þe grete god aboue
þat' knoweþ þat' non acte is causeles
he demeþ of' alle for I wol holde my pes
But' soþ is þis how þat' þis freissche may
haþ take such impressiō þat' day
On pite of' þis sike Damyan
þat' fro hir herte sche ne dryue can
þe remembrance for to don him eese
Certein þouȝt' sche whom þat' þis þing' displese
I rekke nouȝt' for here I him assure
To loue him best' of' eny creature / [leaf 154, ba k]
þoughⁿ he na more nadde þan his scherte
lo pite renneþ sone in gentil herte
Her may ȝe se how excellent' *fran*chise
In wo*m*men is whan þey narwe hem auyse
Som tyrañt' þer is as þer ben many oon
þat' haþ an herte as hard as eny stoon
Which wolde han lete him steruen in þe place
Wel raþer þan haue *grau*nted him þat' grace

And hem reioysen in here cruel pryde
And recched nou3t to ben an homicide
¶ This gentil may fulfild of alle pite
Right so of hire hond a *lettre* made sche
In which sche *grauntep* him of hire *verray grace*
per lackep nou3t oonly but day and space
Wher pat sche mighte to his lust suffise
ffor it schal be right as he wol deuyse
And whan sche saugh hire tyme vpon a day
To visite pis damyan gop faire may
And sotilly pis *lettre* doun sche priste
vnder his pilwe rede iff him liste
Sche takep him by pe hond and harde him twiste
So secrely pat no wight hit wiste
And bad him be al hool and forp sche wente
To Ianuare whan pat he for hire sente
vp rysep Damyan pe nexte morwe
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe
he kembip him and proynep him and pikep
he dop al pat pis lady lust and likep
And ek to Ianuare he gop as lowe
As euer did a dogge for pe bowe
he is so plesaunt vnto euery man
ffor craft is al who so pat it can
pat euery wight is fayn to teche him good
And fully in his lady grace he stood
pus lete I Damyan aboute his neede
And my tale forp I wil procede [leaf 155]
Some clerkes halden pat felicite
Stant in delite and *per*fore he
This noble Ianuare wip alle his might
In honeste wise as longep to a knight
Schop him to lyue ful deliciously
his housynge his array al honestely
To his degre was maked as a kinges
Among opir of his honeste pinges

he hadde a gardyn walled al wiþ stoon
So fair a gardyn wot' I nowher noon
ffor out' of' doute I verrayly suppose
þat' he þat' wroot' þe romance of' þe rose
Ne couþe of' it' þe beaute wel deuyse
ne pryapus ne mighte nat' suffise
þouȝ he be god of' gardyns for to telle
The beaute of' þe gardyn and of' þe welle
þat' stood vnder a laurer alway greene
fful often tyme king' Pluto and his queene
Proserpyna and alle hire fayerie
Disporten hem and maken melodye
aboute þat' welle and daunced as men tolde
þis noble knight' þis Ianuare þe olde
Suche deynte haþ in it' to walken and to pleye
þat' he wol suffre no wight' to bere þe keye
Saue he himself' or of' þe smale wiket'
he bar alwey of' siluer a clyket'
Wiþ þe whiche whan þat' him lust' vnschette
And whan þat' he wolde paye his wijf' his dette
In somer sesoñ þider wolde he go
And may his wijf' and no wight' but' þay tuo
A þinges whiche þat' were nouȝt' don a bedde
þey in þe gardyn parformed han and spedde
And in þis wise many a mery day
lyuede þis Ianuare and freissche may
But' worldly ioye may nouȝt' alwey endure
To Ianuare ne to no worldly creature [leaf 155, back]
O sodeyn happ O þou fortune vnstable /
I-like to þe scorpioñ vnstable /
That' flaterest' wiþ þin heed whan þou wolt' stynge
Thyn tayl is deþ þoruȝ þin enuenemynge
O brutel ioye O swete poysoñ queynte
O mustier þat' sotilly canst' peynte
þine ȝiftes vnder þe hewe of' stedefastnesse
þat' þou disceyuedest' boþe more and lesse

Why hast' þou Ianuare þus deceyued
And haddist' him for þi fulle frend receyued
And now þou hast' byraft' him boþe his eyen
ffor sorwe of' which desireþ he to deyen
Allas þis noble Ianuare þat' is so fre
Amydde his lust' and his prosperite
Is woxen blynde and al sodeynly
his deþ þerfore desireþ he outrely
And þer wiþ al þe fyr of' Ielousye
leste þat' his wijf' schulde falle in som folye
So brent' his herte þat' he wolde fayn
That' som man boþe hire and him hadde slayn
ffor neuer [after] his deþ ne in his lyf'
Ne wolde he þat' sche were loue ne wyf'
But euer lyue as a wydewe in cloþes blake
Soule as þe turtil doþ þat' haþ lost' hire make /
But' at' þe laste after a monþe or tweye
his sorwe gan to swage soþ to seye
ffor when he wiste it/ may non oþer be
he paciently took' his aduersite
Saf' out' of' doute may he nouȝt' forgon
þat' he nas Ielous euermore in oon
Which Ielousie it' was so outrageous
þat' neiþer in halle ne in non oþer hous
he nolde suffre hire for to ryde ne go
Ne in non oþer place neuer þe mo
But' if' þat' he hadde hond on hire alway
ffor which ful ofte wepeþ freisshe may [leaf 156]
That' loueþ Damyan so benignely
þat' sche moot' eyþer deye sodeinly
Or elles sche mote han him at' hire leste
sche wayteþ whan hir herte wolde toberste
vpon þat' oþer syde Damyan
Bycomen is þe sorwfulleste man
þat' euere was for neiþer night' nor day
Ne might' he speke a word to freisshe may

As to his purpos of no such matiere /
But if þat Ianuarie most it here /
þat hadde oon hond on hir euer mo
And naþeles by wrytyng to and fro
And pryue signes wist he what sche ment/
And sche knew of þe signe of his entent
O Ianuarie what mighte þe affayle /
þou mightest see as fer as schippes sayle
ffor a[s] good is a blynd disceyued be
As to be deceyued whan a man may se
Lo argus which þat hadde an C. eyen
ffor al þat euer he couþe poure or prien
3it was he blent and god wot so ben mo
þat wenyn wisly þat it nys nat so
Passe ouer is an ese and say nomore
This freissche may of which I spak of yore
In warm wax haþ emprynted þis cliket
þat Ianuarye bar of þis smale wyket
By which vnto his gardyn ofte he wente
And Damyan þat knew hire entente
þe clyket countrefeted priuily
Ther nys no more to say but hastyly
Som wonder by his cliket schal betyde /
Which 3e schullen heere if 3e woln abyde
O noble Ovyde soþ saist þou god wot
What sleight is it þough it be long and hoot
That he nyl fynde it out in som manere
By Pyramus and Thysbe may men leere [leaf 156, back]
þough þey were kepte ful longe streit ouer al
þey ben acorded rownynge þurgh a wal
þer is no wight couþe han founde out such a sleiȝte
But now to purpos er þat dayes eyȝte
Were passed or þe monþe of Iuyl byfille
þat Ianuarye haþ caught so gret a wille
þurgh eggyng of his wijf him for to pleye
In his gardyn and no wight but þey tweye

That' in a morwe vnto his may sayde he
Rise vp my wijf/ my loue my lady fre
þe turtlis voys is herd my doufe sweete
The wynter is gon with̃ alle his reynes weete
Com forþ now wiþ þin eyen columbyne
how fairer ben þy brestes þan is wyne
þe gardyn is enclosed al aboute
Come forþ my white spouse out' of doute
þou hast' me wounded in myn herte O wyf'
No spotte in þe nas in al þy lyf'
Com forþ and let vs taken oure disport
I chees þe for my wyff and my confort'
Suche olde lowde wordes vsed he
On damyan a signe made sche
That' he schulde go biforn wiþ his clyket
þis damyan haþ opened þe wyket
And in he sterte and þat' in such manere
þat' no wight' might' it se ne heere
And stille he sitt' vnder a bussch̃ anon
This Ianuare so blynd as is a stoon
Wiþ mayus in his hond and no wight' mo
In to his freisshe gardyn is he go
And clapte to þe wyket' sodeynly
Now wiff' *quod* he her nys but þou and I
þat' art' þe creature þat' I best loue
ffor by þat' lord þat' sitt' vs alle aboue
I hadde leuer deyen on a knyf'
Then þe offenden deere trewe wyf' [leaf 157]
ffor goddes sake þenk' how I þe chees
Nouȝt' for no coueytise dowteles /
But' oonly for þe loue I hadde to þe
And þough̃ þat' I be olde and may nouȝt' se
Be to me trewe and I wol telle ȝou why
Certes þre þinges scholden ȝe wynne *þerby*
ffirst' loue of' crist' and to ȝour self' honour
And al myn heritage toun and tour

I ȝiue it' ȝow makeþ Ch*art*res as ȝou leste
This schal be do to morwe er sonnes reste
So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse
And preye ȝou on couenaunt þat' ȝe me kisse
And þoughⁿ þat' I be Ielous wyte me nouȝt
ȝe ben so deepe enprynted in my þouȝt'
þat' whan þat' I considere ȝour beaute
And þer wiþ al þe vnlikly elde of' me
I may nouȝt' certes þough I schulde deye
ffor-bere to ben out' of' ȝour companye
ffor verray loue þis is wiþouten doute
Now kisse me wijf' and let' vs rome aboute
¶ This freissche may whan sche þis wordes herde /
Benignely to Ianuarye answerde
But' first' and forward sche bygan to weepe
I haue q*uod* sche a soule for to keepe
As wel as ȝe and also myn honour
And of' my wifhede þilke tendre flour
Which þat' I haue asseured in ȝour hand
Whan þat' þe prest' to yow my body band
Wher-fore I wol answere in þis manere
Wiþ þe leue of' ȝou my lord so deere
I p*ray* god þat' neuer dawe þat' day
þat' I ne sterue as foule as wo*m*man may
If' euer I do vnto my kynne þat' schame /
Oþer elles I empeyre so my name /
þat' y be fals and if' I do þat' lak'
To strype me and putte me in a sakk' [leaf 157, back]
And in þe nexte ryuer do me drenche
I am a gentil wo*m*man and no wenche
Why speke ȝe þus but' men ben euer vntrewe
And wo*m*men han reproef' of' ȝou ay newe
ȝe can non oþer contynaunce I leeue
But' speke to vs as vntriste and in repreue
And wiþ þat' word sche saugh wher damyan
Sat in þe bussⁿ and knelen he bigan

And wiþ hire fynger signes made sche
þat' Damyan schulde clymbe vpon a tree
þat' charged was wiþ fruyt' and vp he wente
ffor verrayly he knew al hire entente
And euery signe þat' sche coupe make
Wel bet' þan Ianuarye hir owne make
ffor in a *lettre* sche hadde told him al
Of' þis matiere how he worche schal
And þus I lete him sitte in þe Pyry
And Ianuarye and mayus rownynge myry
¶ Bright' was þe day and blew þe firmament
Phebus of' gold doun haþ his stremes sent
To gladen eu*ery* flour wiþ his warmnesse
he was þat' tyme in Gemynys as I gesse
But' litel fro his declynacioñ
Of' Cancer Iouys exaltacioñ
And so bifelle þat' in a bright' morwetyde
þat' in þe gardyn on þat' ferþer syde /
Pluto þat' is þe king' of' fayerye
And many a lady in his companye
ffolwyng' his wyf' þe queene *pro*serpyna
Which þat' he rauysshed out' of' *Pro*serpyna
Whiles þat' sche gaderede floures in a mede
In Claudian 3e may þe storyes rede
how in his grysly carte he hire fette
This kyng' of' fayerie a doun him sette
vpon a benche of/ toruys freissch̄ and grene
And right' anon seyde he þus to his queene [leaf 153]
My wijf' *quod* he þat' may no wight' seye nay
þe exp*er*iens proueþ it' eu*ery* day
þe tresoun which þat' wo*m*man doþ to man
Ten hundred þousand tellen I can /
Notable of 3our vntrouþe and brytilnes
O Salamon richest' of' alle richesse
ffulfild of' sapience and of worldly glorie
fful worþy ben þyne wordes to memorie

To eu*er*y wigħt' þat' witt' and resoñ can
þus preiseþ he ȝit' þe bounte of' man
Among' a þousand men ȝit' fond I on
But' of' all*e* wo*m*men fond he neuer noon 2248
þus seiþ þe king' þat knoweþ ȝoure wickednes /
And Ih*esus* filius Cyrak' as I ges /
Ne spekeþ of' ȝou but' seeldyn reuerens
A wilde fuyre a corumpte pestilens 2252
So falle vpon ȝour bodyes ȝit' to nygħt'
Ne se ȝe nougħt' þis honurable knigħt'
By cause allas þat' he is blynd and old
his owne man schal make him kokewold 2256
Lo wher he sitte þe lecchour in þe tree
Now wol I g*ra*unte of' myn mageste
vnto þis olde blynde worþy knigħt
þat' he schal han aȝein his eyȝen sight' 2260
Whan þat' his wijf' wolde don him vylenye
þan schal he knowe al hire harlottrie
Boþe in repreef' of' hire and oþer mo
ȝe schal q*uod* Proserpyn and wol ȝe so 2264
Now by mo moodres syres soule I swere
þat' I schal ȝeuyn hire suffisaunt' answere
And all*e* wo*m*men after for ȝour sake /
þat' þougħ þey ben in eny gilt' y-take 2268
Wiþ face bold þei scholden hemself' excuse
And bere hem doun þat' wolden hem accuse /
ffor lakke of' answere non of' hem scholde deyen
Al hadde ȝe seye a þing' wiþ boþe ȝour eyȝen [leaf 158, back]
ȝit' schullen we so visagen it' hardyly
And weepe and swere and chide subtyly
þat' ȝe schuln ben as lewed as here gees
What' rekkeþ me of' ȝour auctoritees 2276
I wot' wel þis Iewe þis Salamon
ffand of' vs wo*m*men fooles many oon
But' þough þat' he ne fond no good wo*m*man
þer haþ I-founde many anoþer man 2280

Wommen ful trewe ful good ful vertuous
Witnesse on hem þat dwellen in cristes hous
Wiþ martirdom þey prouyd hir[1] constance [1 MS ħ]
þe Romayne Iestes maken remembrance 2284
Of many a verray trewe wijf also
but sire ne beþ nouȝt wroþ as be it so
þouȝ þat he seyde he fond no good womman
I pray ȝou take þe sentence of þe man 2288
he mente þus þat in souerayne bounte
Nis non but god but neyþer he ne sche
Ey for verray god þat nys but oon
What make ȝe so moche of Salamon 2292
What þoghħ he made a temple goddes hous
What þoghħ he were riche and glorious
So made he a temple of false godis
Who mighte do a þing þat more forbode is 2296
Parde as fayr as he his name in-plastre
he was a lecchour and an ydolastre
And in his eelde he verry god forsook
And if þat god ne hadde as seiþ þe book 2300
y-spared him for his fadres sake he scholde
haue lost his regne sonner þan he wolde
I sette nouȝt of alle þe vylenye
þat ȝe of wommen wite a bottirflye 2304
I am a womman needes moot I speke
Oþer elles swelle til myn herte breke
ffor siþenes he seyde þat we ben Iangeleresses
As euer mote I brouke boþe my tresses [leaf 159] 2308
I schal not spare for no curtesye
To speke him harm þat wolde vs vilanye
Dame *quod* þis pluto be no lengere wroþ
I ȝiue it vp but seþens I swor myn oþ 2312
þat I wolde *grau*nten him his sight aȝein
My word schal stonde þat warne I þe certayn
I am a king it sitt me nouȝt to lye
And I *quod* sche a queen of fayerye 2316

hire answere sche schal haue I vndertake
let' vs no more wordes make 2318

[*For the rest of the Tale* (*from MS Arch. Seld. B.* 14) *see the Appendix.*]

[*THE PROEM.*]

¶ The p[ro]loge of' þe ffrankeleyn

Thise olde gentile britouns in here dayes [*on leaf* 159]
Of' diuerse auentures maden layes
Rymeden in here firste britoun tonge
Whiche layes with here instrumentz þey songe 712
Oþer elles radden hem for here plesaunce
And on of' hem haue I in remembraunce
Which I schal seye wiþ as good wille as I can
But' sires by cause þat' I am a burel man 716
At' my begynnyng' first' I ȝou beseche
haueþ me excused of' my rude speche
I lerned neuer rethorik' certayn
þing' þat' I speke it' mot' be bare and playn 720
I slepte neuer on þe mount' of' pernaso
Ne neuer lered Marcus Thullius ne Cithero
Colours of' Rethorik' ne knowe I non wiþouten drede
But' suche coloures as growen in þe mede 724
Oþir elles suche as men dye or peynte
Colours of' Rethorik' ben me to queynte
Myn spyrit' feleþ nought' of' such matere
But' if' ȝe luste my tale schul ȝe not' here 728

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther was a knigħt' þat' loued and did his peyne 730
In amoryke þat' cleped is Briteyne 729
To seruen a lady in his beste wise
And many a labour and many a gret' emprise 732

he for his lady wrouȝt' er sche were wonne
ffor sche was on þe fairest' vnder sonne [leaf 159, back]
And eek' þerto come of' so heih kynrede
That' wel vnneþes durst' þis knigħt' for drede
Telle hire his wo his peyne and his distresse
But' atte laste sche for his worþinesse
And namely for his meke obeissance
haþ such a pite caught' of' his penaunce
That' priuely sche felle of' his acord
To take him for hir housbonde and hire lord
Of' such lordschipe as men han ouer here wyues
And for to lede þe more in blisse here lyues
Of' his fre wille he swor hire as a knigħt
þat' neuer in his wille by day ne by nigħt/
Ne schulde he vpon him take no maystrie
Aȝeins hire wille ne kuyþe hire Ialousye
But' hire obeye and folwe hire wille in al
As ony louere to his lady schal
Saue þat' þe name of' souereynete
That' wolde he han for schame of' his degre
Sche þankeþ him and wiþ ful gret' humblesse
Sche sayde sire seþþen of' your gentilnesse
ȝe profre me to han a large reyne
Ne wolde neuer god betwixe vs tweyne
As in my gilt' were eyþer werre or stryf'
Sire I wil be ȝour owne humble trewe wijf'
haue here my trouþe til þat' myn herte breste
Thus be þey boþe in quiete and in reste
ffor o þing' syres saufly dar I seye
That' frendes euerich oþer mote obeye
If' þay wole longe holde companye
loue wol nought ben constreigned by maystrie
Whan maystrie comeþ þe god of' loue anon
Beteþ on his wynges and fare wel he is gon
loue is a þing' as any spiryt' fre
Wommen of' kynde desiren liberte

And nou3t to be constreigned as a þral
And so do men if I þe soþe seye schal [leaf 160]
loke who þat is most pacient in loue /.
he is at his auauntage aboue
Pacience is an heih vertu certeyn
ffor it venquissheþ as þese clerkes seyn
Thynges þat Rigor schulde neuer atteigne
ffor euery word men may nou3t chyde ne pleyne /
lerneþ to suffre or elles so mote I gon
3e schullen it lerne wheþer 3e wole or non
ffor in þis worlde certeyn no wight nys /
þat he ne doþ or saiþ sumtyme amys /
Or oþir siknesse oþer constillacioñ
Wyn wo or chaungyng of complexioñ
Causeþ ful often to don amys oþer speken
On euery wrong men may nou3t ben awreken
After þe tyme moste be temperaunce
To euery wight þat can no gouernance /
And þerfore haþ þis worþy wise knight
To lyue in ese suffraunce hire behight
And sche to him ful wisly gan to swere
That neuer schulde þer be defaute in here /
here may men sen an humble wyse acord
Thus haþ sche take hir seruañt and hire lord
Seruaunt in loue and lord in mariage
Then was he boþe in lordschipe and seruage .
Seruage nay but in lordschipe aboue
Seþyns þat he haþ boþe his lady and his loue
his lady certes and his wyf also
The whiche þat lawe of loue acordeþ þer to
And whan he was in þis prosperite
home wiþ his wyf he goþ to his cuntre
Nou3t fer fro pedmark þer as his dwellyng was
Wher as he lyueþ in blisse and in solas
Who couþe telle but he hadde wedded be
þe ioye þe ese and þe prosperite /

That is bitwixe an housebond and his wyf
A ȝeer and more lasted þis blisful lijf [leaf 160, back]
Til þat þis knight of which I spak of þus
þat of kynrede was cleped arneragus
Schope him to gon and dwelle a ȝeer or tweyne
In engelond þat cleped eek was bretayne
To seche in armes worschipe and eek honour
ffor alle his lust he sette in such labour
And dwelleþ þere þe book saiþ þus
Now wol I stynte of þis arneragus
And speken I wole of dorygen his wijf
þat loueþ hir housbonde as hire hertes lyf
And for his absens wepeþ sche and sikeþ /
As don þese noble wyues when hem likeþ
Sche mourneþ wakeþ wayleþ fasteþ & pleyneþ
Desïre of his *pr*esence hire so destreyneþ
That alle þis wyde world sche sette at nouȝt
hire freendes which þat knewe hire heuy þouȝt
Conforted hire in al þat euer þey mighte or may
They prechen hire þay tellen hire night and day
þat causeles sche sleeþ hire self allas /
And eu*e*ry confort possible in þis cas
þey don to hire wiþ alle here busynes /
And alle to make hire lete hir heuynes
By *pr*ocesse as ȝe knowe wel eu*e*rychon
Men may so longe grauen in þe ston
Til som figure þ*e*rinne enprentyd be
So longe han þey conforted hire þat sche
Receyued haþ by hope and by resoñ
The empryntyng of hir constillacioñ
Thurgh which hire grete sorwe gan aswage /
Sche may nought alway endure in such a rage /
And eek arneragus in al þis care
haþ sent his *lett*res home in al þis fare
And þat he wolde come hastly aȝayn
Oþer hadde þis sorwe hire herte slayn

hire frendes sawe hire herte gan to slake /
And preyed hire on knees for goddes sake [leaf 161]
To come and rome hire in companye
Away to dryue hire derke fantasye
And fynally sche grαunted þat' requeste
ffor wel sche sawe it' was for þe beste
Now stood hire castel faste by þe see
And often wiþ hire freendes walked sche
hire to disporte on þe banke on heih
Wher as sche many schippe and barge seih
Seylinge here cours where hem luste to go
But' 3it' was þere a parcelle of' hir wo
ffor to hir self' ful often seyde sche
Is þer no schippe of' so many as I se
Wole brynge home my lord þen wolde myn herte
Al waryssche of' þis bitter peynes smerte
Anoþer tyme þer wole sche sitte and þinke
And caste hire eyen dounward fro þe brynke
But' whan sche saugh þe grisly rokkes blake
ffor verray fere so wolde hire herte quake
þat' on hire feet' sche mighte nought' hire sustene
Thenne wolde sche sitte a doun vpon þe grene
And pitously in to þe see byholde
And sayn right' þus wiþ sorowful hertes colde
Eterne god þat' þurgh þy puruyaunce
ledest' þe world by certein gouernaunce
In ydelnesse as men sayn 3e no þing' make
But' lord þese grisely feendly rokkes blake
That' semen raþer a foul confusioñ
Of' werk' þen any fayr creacioñ
Of' whiche a parfyt' god and a stable
Why han 3e wrou3t' þis werk' vnresonable
ffor by þis werke south north est' and west'
Ther nys y-fostred man ne bryd ne best'
hit' doþ no good to my witt' but' annoyeþ
Se 3e nou3t' lorde how mankynde it destroyeþ

An hundred þousand bodyes of mankynde /
han rokkes slayn al be þey nouȝt in mynde [leaf 161, back]
Which mankynde is a fair part of þy werk
That þou it madest y-like to þin hond werk
Thenne semed it ȝe hadde a gret chierte
Toward mankynde but how þan may it be
That ȝe suche menys make it to distroyen
Whiche menys doþ no good but euer annoyen
I wot wel clerkes woln sayn as hem leste
By argumentz þat al þing is for þe beste
Though I ne can þe causes for soþe knowe
but þilke god þat made wynd to blowe
As kepe my lord þis is my conclusiõn
To clerkes lete I al disputaciõn
But wolde god þat alle þe rokkes blake
Were sonken in to helle for his sake /
These rokkes sleen myn herte for feere
Thus wolde sche sayn with many a pitous teere
hire freendes sawe þat nas no disport
To romen by þe see but discomfort
And schopen for to pleyen som where elles /
þey leden hire by Ryueres and by welles
And eek in oþer places delitables
þey daunce and pleye at Chesse and at tables
So on a day right on þe morne tyde
vnto a gardyne þat was right pere besyde
In which þat þey hadde made here ordynañce
Of vitaile and of oþer puruyaunce
They gon and pleyen hem al þe longe day
And þis was on þe sixte morwe of may
Which may hadde peynted wiþ his softe schoures /
This gardyn ful of leues and of floures
And wiþ crafte of mannes hande so curiously
Arayed haþ þis gardyn trayelly
That neuer nas þer gardyn of such prys
But if it were þe verrey paradys

The odure of' floures and þe freisshe sight' /
Wolde han made ony pensyf' herte light' [leaf 162]
That' euer was born / but' if' to gret' siknesse /
Oþer to gret' sorwe hyld it in distresse / 916
And after dynere gan þey to daunce 918
So ful it was of' beaute with plesaunce / 917
And synge also but' dorigen allone
Sche made alwey hire compleynt' and hire mone 920
ffor sche ne saugh him on þe daunce go
þat' was hire housbond and hir loue also
But' naþeles sche moste a tyme abyde /
And with good hope sche let' hir sorwe glyde 924
vpon þis daunce amonges oþer men
Daunced a squier biforen Dorigen
That' freisscher was and iolyer of' array
As to my dome þan is þe monþe of' May 928
he syngeþ and daunceþ passyng' any man
That' is or was siþenes þis world bygan
Ther wiþ he was if' men schulde him discryue /
On þe beste farynge man on lyue / 932
3ong' streng' right' vertuous riche and wys
And wel biloued and holden in gret' prys
And schortliche if' þe soþe telle I schal
vnwyfyng' of' þis Dorigen at al 936
This lusty squyer seruaunt' to venus
Which þat' y-cleped was Aurelius
had loued hire best' of' eny creature
Tuo 3eer and more as was his aduenture / 940
But' neuer durste he telle hire of' his greuance
Wiþoute cuppe he drank al his penaunce
he was dispeyred no þing' durst' he seye
Saue in his sawe somwhat' wolde he wreye 944
his woo as in general compleynyng'
he sayde he louede and was biloued noþing'
Of such matiere made he many layes
Songes compleigntes roundeletis virrelayes 948

how þat he durste nou3t his sorwe telle /
That langusshiþ as fuyre doþ in helle [leaf 162, back]
And deye seyde he moste as did Ekko
ffor narsisus þat durste nou3t telle hir wo
In oþer manere þenne 3e here me seye ·
Ne durst he nou3t to hire his wo bewreye
Saue peraduenture som tyme at daunces
There 3ong folk kepen here obseruaunces
hit may wel be he loked on hire face
In such a wise as man þat askeþ grace
But no þing wiste sche of his entent
Naþeles it happed or þey þennes went
By cause þat he was hire ney3bourre /
And was a man of worschipe and honour
And hadde knowen him ofte tymes 3ore /
þey felle in speche ofte more and more /
vnto his purpos drowe aurelius
And whan he saw his tyme he sayde þus
Ma dame quod he by god þat þis world made
So þat I wiste it mighte 3our herte glade
I wolde þat day þat 3oure arneragus /
Wente on þe see þat I aurelius
had went þat I schulde neuer haue come a3ain
ffor wel I woot my seruise is in vayn
My guerdoñ nys but berstyng of myn herte /
Ma dame reweþ vpon my peynes smerte
ffor as wiþ a swerd 3e may me sle or saue
her at 3oure foot god wolde þat/ I were graue /
I haue as now no more leysir for to seye /
haue mercy on me swete or 3e wolen do me deye
Sche gan to loke vpon aurelius
Is þis 3oure wille quod sche and say 3e þus
Neuer erst quod sche ne wist I what 3e mente
But now Aurely I knowe 3oure entente
By þilke god þat 3af me soule and lyf
Ne schal I neuer be vntrewe wyf

In word ne in werk' as fer as I haue wit' /
I wole ben his to whom þat' I am knyt' [leaf 163]
But after þat' in pleyn þus seyde sche / 988
Tak' þis for fynal answer as for me / 987
Aurely *quod* sche by hihe god aboue
3it' wol I *gra*unte 3ou to be 3oure loue
Seþyns I 3ou se so pitously compleyne /
loke what' day þat' engelond is Bryteyne / 992
3e remewe alle þe rokkes ston by stoon.
þat' þay ne lette schip no boot' to goon
I say whan 3e han made þese costes so clene
Of' Rokkes þat' þer nys no ston y-sene / 996
þan wol I loue 3ou best/ of' any man
haue here my trouþe in al þat' euer I can
Is þere non oþer grace *quod* he /
No by þat' lord quod sche þat' made me 1000
ffor wel I wot' þat' þat' schal neuer betyde
let' such folye out' of' 3our herte glyde
What' deynte schulde man haue by his lijf'
ffor to loue anoþer mannes wyf' 1004
That' haþ hir body whan so þat' him likeþ
Aurelius ful ofte sore sikeþ /
Wo was aurely whan þat' he þis herde /
And wiþ a sorwful herte þus answerde / 1008
ma dame *quod* he þis were impossible /
Thenne mot' I deye on sodeyn deþ orrible /
And wiþ þat' word he torned him anon
þo came hire oþer frendes many oon 1012
And in þe aleyes romed vp and doñ
And no þing' wiste of' þis conclusioñ
But' sodeinly bygan to reuel newe /
Til þat' þe brighte sonne loste his hewe / 1016
ffor thorisowte haþ raft' þe sonne his light'
þis is as moche to say as it was night'
And home þey gon in Ioye and in solas /
Saue oonly wrecched aurelius allas / 1020

he to his hous is gon wiþ sorwful herte
he seiþ he may not fro his deþ asterte [leaf 163, back]
him semeþ he felþ his herte colde
vp to þe heuene his handes gan he holde
And on his knees bare he sette him doñ
And in his rauynge sayde his orisoñ
ffor verray wo out of his witte he breyde /
he nyste nouȝt what he spak but þus he seyde
Wiþ pitous herte haþ he his compleint bygonne
vnto þe goddesse and first vnto þe sonne
he sayde appollo god and gouernour
And euery plaunte herbe tre and flour
þat ȝeuest after þi declinacioñ
To ilk of hem his tyme and his sesoun
And þin herborwe chaungeþ lowe and heiȝe
lord Phebus cast þin merciable eyȝe
On wrecched Aurely þat am but lorn
lo lord my lady haþ my deþ y-sworn
Wiþouten gilt but þin benignite
vpon my dedly herte haue sum pite
But wel I wot lord Phebus if ȝou leste
ȝe may me helpe saue my lady beste
Now vouchef sauf þat I may ȝou deuyse
how þat I may be holpe and in what wyse
ȝoure blisful suster lucyna þe schene .i. luna lucyna.
þat of þe see is cheef goddesse & queene
Though Neptunus haue deyte in þe see
ȝit Emperesse abouen him is sche /
ȝe knowen wel lord right as hire desire
Is to be quyked and leteþ of ȝoure fire
ffor which sche folweþ ȝou ful besyly
Right so þe see desireþ naturelly
To folwen hire as sche þat is goddesse
Boþe in þe see and in Ryueres more and lesse
Wher-fore lord Phebus þis is myn requeste
Do þis myracle or I do myn herte to breste

þat' þou next' at' þis apposicioun
Which in þe signe schal be of' þe leoun [leaf 164]
And preyed hire so gret' a flood to brynge
That' .v. fatheme at' þe leste it' ouer springe
þe hyeste rokke in armorik' Britayne
And lete his flood endure 3eres twayne
Thenne certes to my lady may I saye
holdeþ 3oure hestes þe rokkes ben awaye
lord Phebus do þis myracle for me
Pray hire sche go no faster cours þan 3e
I say 3ou þus pray 3our suster þat' sche go
None faster cours þan 3e þis 3eres tuo
Then schal sche be euer at' þe fulle alway
And springe flood lasten boþe night' and day
And but' sche fouche sauf' in such manere
To graunte me my lady souerein dere /
Preye hire to synken euery rokke a doun
In to hire owne darke Regioñ
vnder þe grounde þer Pluto duelleþ Inne
Oþer neuer more schal I my lady wynne
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barfoot' seeke
lord Phebus seeþ þe teeres on my cheeke /
And of' my peyne haue compassioñ
And wiþ þat' word in swowne he felle a doun
And long' tyme he lay in a traunce
his broþer which þat' knew of' his penaunce
vp caught' him and to bedde him broughte
Dispeyred in his torment and in his þought
Lo y þis woful creature lete lye
Chese he for me whether he wol lyue or dye
Arneragus wiþ hele and gret' honour
As he was of' Chyualry þe flour
Is comen home and oþere worþy men
O blisful art' þou Dorigen
þat' hast' þin lusty housbonde in þin armes
þe freissche knight þe worþy man of' armes

That' loueþ þe as his owen hertes lyf'
No þing' luste he to be ymaginatyff' [leaf 164, back]
Of' any wigħt' hadde spoke while he was oute
To hire of' loue he made þer-of' no doute 1096
he nouȝt entendeþ to no such matere
But dauncep Iustiþ and makeþ good cheere
As þus in Ioye and blisse I lete hem dwelle
And of' þe swete Aurelyus wol I telle 1100
In langure and in furious tormentz þus
Tuo ȝer and more lay wrecche aurelius
Or ony foot' on erþe he mighte gon
No confort' in þis tyme nade he non 1104
Saue of' his broþer which þat' was a clerk'
he knew of' al þis wo and of' al þis werk'
ffor to non oþer creature certeyn
Of' þis matiere ne durste he no word seyn 1108
vnder his brest' he bar it more secre
Then euer did Pamphilius for Galathe
his brest' was hole wiþouten for to sene
But' in his herte was ay þe arwe kene 1112
And wel ȝe knowen þat' a sore sauure
In surgerie ful perilous is þe cure
But' man mighť touche þe arwe or come þerby
his broþer wepeþ and wayleþ priuyly 1116
Til atte laste him felle in remembraunce
That' whiles he was at Orlyaunce in ffraunce
As ȝonge clerkes þat' ben likerous
To reden artes þat' ben curious 1120
Seken in euery halk' and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
he him remembreþ vpon a day
At' Orlyaunce in studye a book' he say 1124
Of' magique naturell which his felawe
That' was þat' tyme a bachiler of' lawe
Al were he þere to lerne anoþer craft
And priuely vpon his deske y-laft' 1128

This book' spak' mochil of' þis operacioñs
Touchynge þe .xviij. mancioñs [leaf 165]
That' longen to þe mone and suche folye
As in oure dayes nys nought' worþ a flye 1132
ffor holy chirche saiþ in oure byleeue
Ne suffreþ non illusioñ vs to greeue
And whan þis book' was in remembr*a*unce
Anon for ioye he gan for to daunce 1136
And to himselue sayde pryuely
My broþer schal be warisshed hastily
ffor I am siker þat' þer ben sciences
By whiche men maken dyuerse apparences / 1140
Whiche as þe subtile tregetoures pleyen
ffor ofte at' festes herde I seyen
That' tregettours wiþinne an halle large
han made in come wat*er* and a barge / 1144
And in þe halle rowen vp and doun
Som tyme haþ semed a grym leoun
[and somtyme flouris springe / as in a mede [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
somtyme a vyne & grapes / white & rede]
Som tyme a castel al of' lym and ston
And whan hem liked voyded it anon
þus semed it' to eu*er*y mannes sight'
Now þenne conclude I þus if' þat' I might' *1152*
At' Orliaunce som olde felawe I-fynde
That' hadde þe moones manciouns in mynde
Oþer magike naturel aboue
he scholde wel make my broþ*er* han his loue / *1156*
ffor wiþ apparens a man may make
To mannes sight' þat' alle þe Rokkes blake
Of' Britaigne were y-went' eu*er*ychon
And schippes by þe brinke mighte comen and goon 1160
And in such forme endure a 3eer or tuo
þen were my broþ*er* warissched of' his wo
þen most' sche needes knowen hire byheste
Or elles he schal schamen hire at' þe leste 1164

What schulde I make a lenger tale of' þis
Vnto his broþer bedde come he is
And such confort he ȝaff' him for to gon
To Orlyaunce þat' he vpstarte anon [leaf 165, back] 1168
And on his way forþward is he fare
In hope to ben y-lissed of' his care /
When þay were come almost' to þat' Cite
But if' it' were a tuo forlong' oþir þre 1172
A ȝong' clerk' romyng' by himself' þey mette
Which þat' in latyn thriftily hem grette
And after þat' he sayde a wonder þing'
I knowe quod he þe cause of' ȝoure comyng' 1176
And er þey forþer any foote went'
he tolde hem alle þat' was in here entent'
This brytoun clerk' him asked of' felawes
The which þat' he had knowen in olde dawes 1180
And he answerde him þat' þey dede were /
ffor which he wepe ful ofte many a tere
Doun of' his hors Aurelius light anon
And forþ wiþ þis magicien forþ is he gon 1184
home to his hous and made hem wel at ese /
hem lacked no vitayle þat' hem might' plese /
So wel arrayed hous as þer was oon
Aurelius in his lyf' saugh noon 1188
He schewed him er he wente to sopere
fforestes parkes ful of' wilde deere
[there saw he hartes / with hornys ful highe [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
pasturynge right faire / & merilie 1192
he saw of hem an hundred / sleyn with houndes
and somme with arwis blede / & bitter woundes
he saw when voided were / the wilde dere
these ffaukeners / vppon a faire Rivere] 1196
And how ffaukons han þe heroñ slayne
Then sawe he knightes iusten in a playne
And after þis he dide him such plesaunce
That he him schewed his lady in a daunce 1200

On which himself' he daunced as him þought
And whan þis mayster þat' þis magiq*ue* wrought
Sawh it' was tyme to clappe his hondes tuo
And fare wel al oure reuel is y-do
And 3it/ remewe þey neuer out' of' þis hous /
Whiles þey sawe al þis sight' merueylous
But' in his study þer as his bookes be
þey saten stille and no wight' but' þey þre
To him his mayster called þanne a squiere
And seyde him þus is redy oure sopere [leaf 166]
Almost' an hour it' is I vndertake
Seþyns I 3ou bad oure souper to make
When þat' þis worþy men wenten with me
vnto my study þer as my bokes be
Sire q*uod* this squyer when it' likeþ 3ou
It' is al redy þey 3e wolen right' now /
Go we þen soupe q*uod* he and for þe beste /
These auerous folk' som tyme mote haue reste
And after souper felle þey in trete
What' so*m*me schulde þis maystres guerdoñ be /
Te remewe alle þe rokkes of' Brytaigne
And eek' fro Geroun to þe mouþ of' Sayne
he made it' straunge / and swore so god him saue
lasse þan a þousand pound he nolde nou3t' haue
Ne gladly for þat' so*m*me ne wolde he gon
Aurelius wiþ blisful herte anon
Answerde þus fy on a þousand pound
þis wyde worlde þat' men seyn is round
þat' wolde I 3iue if' I were lord of' it'
This bargayn is ful dryue for we be knyt /
3e schulle be payed trewely by my trouþe
But' lokeþ now for no necligence or slouþe
3e tary vs heere no lenger þan to morwe
Nay quod þis clerk' haue heer my trouþe to borwe
To bedde is gon aurelius whan him liste
And wel neigh al þat' night' he hadde his reste

That for his labour and for his hope of blisse
his woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse
vpon þis morwe when þat it was day
To Britaigne toke þay þe righte way
Aurelius and þis magicien besyde
And ben descendid þer þey woln abyde
And þis was as þe bokes me remembre
þe colde frosty sesoun of Decembre
Phebus wax olde and hewed lik latoun
That in his hoote declinacioñ [leaf 166, back]
Schon as þe burnyd gold wiþ stremes brigħt
But now in Scorpioñ a doun he ligħt
Wher as he schon ful pale I dar wel sayn
The bitter frostes wiþ þe slete and rayn
Destroyed hath þe grene in euery ʒerde /
Ianus sit by þe furye wiþ double berde
And drynkeþ of his bugle horn þe wyn
Biforn him stant þe braun of tuxed swyn
And a nowel cryeþ euery lusty man
Aurelius in al þat euer he can
Doþ to his maister cheere and reuerence
And preyeþ him to don his diligence
To bryngen him out of his peynes smerte
Or wiþ a swerd þat he wolde slitte his herte
þat subtil clerk which þat rouþe hadde of þis man
þat ni ght and day he him spedde þat he ne lan
To wayte a tyme of his conclusioñ
This is to say to make illusioun
I ne can no termes of astrologie /
By which an apparence of Iogellerie /
That sche and euery wigħt scholde wene and seye
þat of Britaigne þe rokkes were aweye
Oþer elles þey were sonken vnder grounde
So atte laste whan þat he his tyme fonde
To make his Iapes and his wreechednes
Of which a supersticious cursednesse

his tables colletanes forþ he brought
ffull wel corrected ne þer lakked nouȝt/
Ne his collectes ne his expans ȝeres
Ne his rotes ne his oþer geres /
As ben his centrys and his argumentz
And his proporcions conuenientz
ffor his equacioñs in euery þing
And by his viij spere in his werkynge
he knew how fer Alnaþe was y-schoue
ffro þe hede of þilke fixe aries aboue [leaf 167]
That in þe ixe spere considered is
ffull subtilly he calkeþ al þis /
And whan he hadde founde his firste mansioñ
he knewe þe remenaunt by proporcioñ
And knewe þe arisyng of/ þe mone wel
And in whos face and terme euery del
And knew ful wel þe moones mansioñ
acordañt to his operacioñ
And knew also his oþer obseruaunces /
ffor suche illusions and suche meschaunces /
As heþin folk vsed þilke dayes
ffor whiche no lenger maked he delayes
But þough his magik for a wike or tweye /
It semed as alle þe rokkes were aweye
Aurelyus which þat dispeyred is
Wheþer he schal han his loue or fare amys
Awayteþ night and day of þis myracle /
And whan he knewe þat þer was non obstacle
þat voyded were þise rokkes euerychon
Doun to þis maistres feet he felle anon
And seyde I woful wrecche aurelius
þanke ȝou lord and lady myn venus
That me han holpe fro my cares colde /
And to þe temple forþ his way haþ holde
Where he knewe he scholde his lady se
And whan he saugh his tyme anon right he

Wiþ dredful herte and humble cheere /
Salued haþ his souerayn lady deere /
My rightful lady *quod* þis woful man
Whom I most' drede and loue as I best' kan
And lopest' were of' alle þis world displesé /
Nere it' þat' I for 3ou haue suche disese
That' I moste dye her at' 3our foot' anon
But' not' wolde I telle how me is wo bygon
But' eertes eyþer most I deye or pleyne /
3e sleen me gilteles for verrey peyne / [leaf 167, back]
But' of' my deþ þoughⁿ 3e haue no rouþe
Auyseþ 3ou er þat' 3e lese 3our trouþe
Repentiþ 3ou for þilke god aboue /
Or 3e me sleen by cause þat' I 3ou loue /
ffor ma dame wel 3e wot' þat' 3e han highⁿt'
Noughⁿt/ þat' I chalenge eny þing' of' righⁿt'
Of' 3ou souereyne lady but' 3oure grace
But' in a gardyn 3onde at' such a place
3e wot' righⁿt' wel þat' 3e behighte me
And in myn hande my trouþe plighte me
To loue me best' god wot' 3e sayde so
Al be þat' I vnworþy am þerto
Madame I speke it for þe honour of' 3ow
More þen to saue myn hertes lyf' right' now /
I haue don so as 3e haue commaunded me
And if' 3e vouche sauf' 3e may go se /
And as 3ou luste haueþ 3oure byheste in mynde
ffor quyk' or deed righⁿt' þus 3e schulle me fynde
In 3ow liþ al to do me lyue or deye
But wel I wot' þe rokkes ben aweye /
he took' his leeue and sche astoned stood
In alle hir face þer nas a drop of' blood
Sche wende neuer han comyn in such a trappe
Allas quod sche þat' þis euer schulde happe
ffor wende I neuer by possibilite
þat' such a muster or such a meruaile schulde be

It is ayein þe *pro*cesse of nature [1] [1] *These lines are transposed in the MS.*]
And home sche goþ a sorwful creature [1]
ffor verray feere vnneþes may sche go
Sche wepeþ and wayleþ a day or tuo
And swowneþ þat it rouþe was to se
But why it was to no wight tolde sche
ffor out of toune was gon arneragus
But to hir self sche sayde and spak þus
In hire compleynt as ȝe schullen after heere
Wiþ face pale and wiþ sorweful cheere [leaf 166]
Allas *quod* sche on þe fortune I pleyne
That vnwar hast wrapped me in þi cheyne
ffor which þe eschape wot I no socour
Saue oonly deþ oþer elles dishonour
On of þese tuo bihoueþ me to chese
But naþeles ȝit hadde I leuer to lese /
My lif þan of my body to han a schame
Oþer knowe my self fals oþer lese my name /
And wiþ my deþ I may be quyte y-wys
haþ þer nouȝt many a wyf er þis
And many a mayden y-slayn hem self allas
Rapir þan wiþ here bodyes doñ trespas
And certes lo þise stories beren witnesse
Whan xxx tyrauntz ful of cursednesse
hadde slayn Phydon in athenes atte leste
þey comaunded his douȝtres to areste /
And bryngen hem byforn hem in dispyt
Al naked to fulfille here foule delyt
And in here fadres blod þey made hem daunce
vpon þe pament god ȝeue hem meschaunce
ffor whiche þese woful maydens ful of drede /
Raþer þan þey wolde lese here maydenhede /
þay pryuely ben sterte in to a welle /
And dreynt hemselue as þe bookes telle
They of mesue lete enquere and seke
Of lacedemye .L. maydens eeke

On which þey wolden don here leccherie
But' was þer non of' al þat companye /
þat' sche nas slayn and wiþ a glad entent
Chese raþir for to dye þan for to assent' 1384
To ben oppressed of' here maydenhede
Why schulde I þanne to deye ben in drede
lo eke þe tyraunt' Anstoclydes
þat' loued a mayde þat/ high̃t' Symphalides 1388
Whan þat' hir fader slayn was on a nigh̃t/
vnto þe Dyanes temple goþ sche anon righ̃t' [leaf 168, back]
hente þe ymage with hire armes tuo
ffro which ymage wolde sche neuere go 1392
No wigh̃t' migh̃t' of' hit hir armes race
Til sche was slayn in þe selue place /
Now seþyns þat' maydens hadde such despit/
To ben defouled wiþ mannes foul delyt' 1396
Wel augh̃t' a wyf' raþer hirself' to sle/
þan ben defouled as þenkeþ me
þat' schal I sayn of' hasdrubaldes wyf'
That/ at' kartage byraft' hir self' hir lyf' 1400
ffor whan sche sawh̃ þat/ Romayns wan þe toun
Sche took' hir children alle and swept' a doun
In to þe fuyr and ches raþer to dye
þan eny Romeyn did hir vilanye 1404
haþ nouȝt' lucres y-slayn hir self' allas
At' Rome þere sche oppressed was
Of' Tarquyn for hir þough̃t' it' was a schame /
To lyue whan þat' sche had lost' hire name / 1408
The viij. maydens of' Milesye also /
han slayn hem self' for drede and for wo
Raþir þan folke of' gaule scholde hem oppresse /
Mo þen a þousend stories as I gesse / 1412
Couþe I now telle as touchinge þis matere
Whan habradas was slayn his wyf' so dere
hire self' slough and let hir blood to glyde
In habradas woundes brode and wyde / 1416

And seyde my body at þe leste way
þer schal no wight defoule it if þat I may
What schulde I mo ensamples her of sayn
Sipþen þat so many han hemselue slayn
Wel raþer þan þey wolde defouled be /
I wol conclude what is best for me
[to sle my selue / than be defouled thus [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
I wol be trewe / to Arueragus]
Opir raþer sle my self in som manere
As Demonicious doughter dere
By cause þat sche nolde not defouled be /
O Cedasus it is ful gret pite [leaf 169]
To reden how þi doughtren deyeden allas
þat slowe hemself for such a maner caas
As gret appetyt was it or more
The Theban mayden þat for Nichasore
[hir selue slowe / right for suche manere woo [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
another Theban maiden dide right so]
hire hadde wedded and y-dressed [*spurious*]
ffor on of Macedoigne hadde hire oppressed
þat schal I sayn of Nicharatiffs wijf
þat for such cas byrafte hir self hir lyf
how trewe was eek to alcebiades
his loue þat for to deyen chees
þan for to suffren his body vmbreyde be
lo which a wyf was Alcestem *quod* sche
What Emore of good Penelope /
Al Grece knoweþ of hir chastite
*Par*dee of leodomia is write þus
That when at Troye was slayn protheselayus
No lenger nolde sche lyue after his day
The same of noble Porcia I telle may
Wiþoute Brutus coupe sche not lyue
To whom he hadde al hol his herte ȝiue
The parfyt wyfhod of archemesy
honoured is þurgh al þe Barbary

O teuta queen in þy wyfly chastite
To alle wyfes may a myrour be
[. . . *no gap in the MS: these lines*
. . . . *known only in Ellesmere MS.*]
þus playned Dorigen a day or tweye
Purposed euere þat' sche wolde deye
But' naþeles vpon þe þridde night'
hom cam arneragus þe worþy knight
And asked hire why þat' sche weep so sore
And sche gan weepen euer lenger þe more
Allas q*uod* sche þat' euer was I born
þus haue I seyd q*uod* he þus haue I sworn
I told him alle as 3e han herde bifore
It' needeþ nou3t/ to rehersen it nomore
This housbond wiþ glad cheere in sondry wise /
Answerd and sayde as I schal 3ou deuyse / [leaf 109, back]
Is þer ought' elles Dorigen but' þis
Nay nay q*uod* sche god help me so as wis
This is to meche and it were goddes wille
3e wyf' q*uod* he let' slepe þat' is stille
It' may be wel 3it' peraduenture to say
3e schullen 3our trouþe holden by my fay
ffor god so wisly helpe me
I hadde wel leuere y-stiked for to be /
ffor verray loue which þat I to 3ou haue
But if' 3e schulde 3oure trouþe saue
Trouþe is 3e heihest' þing' þat' man may kepe
But wiþ þat word he brast' anon to weepe /
And sayde I 3ou forbede vp payne of' deþ
That neuer whiles þe lasteþ lyf' and breþ
To no wight' telle how þat' þis matere /
As I may kepe I wole my woo endere
Ne make no contynaunce of' heuynesse
That folk' of' 3ou may deme harme or gesse
And forþ he cleped a squyer and a mayde
Goþ forþ anon wiþ Dorigen he sayde /

And bringeþ hire to such a place anon
þey tooke her leue and on þair way þey gon
But' þey ne wiste why sche þider wente
he nolde no wight' telle hire entente 1492
[. . . . . [*Not in Arch. Seld. B. 14. These lines known only in the Ellesmere MS.*]
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. 1496
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
This squyer which þat' hight' Aurelyus
On Dorigen which þat' was so amerous 1500
Of' aduenture happed hire to mete
Amyd þe toun right' in þe quyke strete
As sche was boun to gon þe wey forþ right
Toward þe gardyn þer as sche hadde hight' 1504
And he was to þe gardynward also
ffor wel he spyed whan sche wolde go
Out' of' hir hous to eny maner place
But' þus þey mette of' auenture or of' *grace* 1508
And he saluyþ hire wiþ glad entent'
And axed of' hire whider þat' sche wente / [leaf 170]
And sche answerde half' as sche were mad
vnto þe gardyn as myn housbonde bad 1512
My trouþe for to holde allas allas
Aurelius gan wonder of' þis caas
And in his herte had gret compassiō
Of' hire and of' hire lamentaciō 1516
And of' Arneragus þe worþy knight'
And bad hire holde al þat' sche hight'
So loþ he was his wijf' schulde breke hir trouþe
And in his herte he caste of' þis gret' rouþe[1] [1 *blots over* e *later*]
Considerynge þe beste on *euery* syde /
That' fro his luste were him better abyde
Than don so heigh a cherles wrecchednes
Aȝeins fraunchise and aȝein al gentilnes 1524

ffor which in fewe wordes sayde he þus
Ma dame seiþ to 3oure lord Arneragus
þat' seþyns I se þis grete gentilnes /
To 3ou and ek' I se wel 3oure distres 1528
þen 3e to me þus schulde breke 3oure trouþe 1530
Certes me þinkeþ it' were right' gret' rouþe [*spurious* 1529]
I haue wel leuer euer to suffre wo
þen I departe þe loue betwixe 3ou tuo 1532
I 3ou relesse ma dame in to 3oure hand
Quyte eu*e*ry surement' and eu*e*ry band
That' 3e han made to me as here byforn
Siþens þilke tyme that 3e were born 1536
My trouþe I plight' I schal 3ou neuer repreue
Of' no biheste and here I take my leue /
As of' þe trewest' and þe beste wyf'
þat' euer 3it/ I knew in al my lyf' 1540
But' euery wight' be war of' hire byheste
On Dorigen remembreþ atte leste /
Thus can a squier don a gentil dede
As wel as can a knight' wiþouten drede 1544
Sche þanked him vppon hir' knees al bare
And home vnto hire housbonde is sche fare [leaf 170, back]
And tolde hem alle as 3e han herde me sayde
And be 3e siker he was so wel a-payde / 1548
þat' it' were inpossible to write /
What' schulde I lengere of' þis cas endite /
Arneragus and dorigen his wijff'
In souerayn blisse leden forþ here lyff' 1552
Neuer eft' ne was þer anger hem betwene
he cherisscheþ hire as þoug̃ sche were a quene
And sche was to him trewe for euermore 1555
Aurelius þat' his cost' haþ al forlore 1557
Curseþ þe tyme þat' euer he was y-born 1558
ffor certes he seiþ I am forlorn [*spurious*]
Allas q*uod* he allas þat' I behigh̃t'
Of' pured gold a þousand pound of' wight/ 1560

vnto þis philosofre how schal I do
I se no more but' þat' I am fordo /
Myn heritage moot' I needes selle
And ben a beggere here may I no leng*er* dwelle 1564
And schamen al my kynrede in þis place
But' I of' him may gete bettre grace /
[but natheles / I wol of him assaye [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
at certeyne dayes / yere bi yere to paye] 1568
I wole þonke him of' his grete curtesye
My troupe wol I kepe I wol nou3t' lye
Wiþ herte sore he goþ vnto his coffre
And broughte gold vnto his philosophre 1572
The value of' .v. hundred pound I gesse
And him besecheþ of' his gentilnesse
To graunte him dayes of' þe remenañt
And maister I dar wel make auaunt 1576
I fayled neuer my troupe as 3it'
ffor sikerly my dettes schal be quyt
Towardes 3ou how euer þat' I fare
To gon abegged in my kirtel bare 1580
But' wolde 3e fouche sauf' vpon suerte
Two 3ere or þre to respiten me
þenne were I wel for elles moste I selle /[1] [1 *a leaf out of the Corpus MS.*]
[myn heritage / ther is no more to telle [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 261, *back*]
this Philosophre soburly answerde
and seide thus / whan he these wordes herde
haue I nat holden couenaunt / vn-to the'
yis certes / wel & trewely / q*uo*d he 1588
hast thow nat had thi lady / as the liketh̄
no no q*uo*d he / & sorowfully he siketh̄
what was the cause / telle me if thou can
Aurelius his tale / anoon bigan 1592
and tolde him al / as ye han herde bifore
hit nedith nat / to rehersen it no more
he seide Arueragus / of gentilnesse
had leuer dien / in sorow & distresse 1596

than his wiff / were of hir trouthe fals [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
the sorow of Dorigen / he told him als
how loth hir was / to ben a wikked wiff
and that she leuere had that day lost hir liff 1600
and that hir trouthe she swore / thorugh innocence
she neuere erst herde speke / of apparence
that made me han of hir / so grete pite
and right as frely / as he sente hir to me 1604
as frely sente I hir / to him ageyne
this is al & som / ther is no more to seyne
this Philosophre answerde / leue brother [leaf 262]
euerych of yow dide gentilly / to other 1608
thow art a squyer / & he is a knyght
but god forbede / for his blisful myght
but if a Clerke / couthe do a gentil dede
as wel as any of yow / it is no drede 1612
sir I relece the / thi thousand pounde
as thow right now / were crope out of the grounde
ne neuere er now / ne haddist thow knowe me
for sir I wol nat taken / a peny of the 1616
for al my crafft / ne nought for my travaile
thow hast I-paide wel / for my vitaile
hit is I-now / & farewel haue good day
and toke his hors / & forth he goth his way 1620
lordinges this question / than wold I axe now
whiche was the most fre / as thenketh yow
now telleth me / er that I ferther wende
I can no more / my tale is at an ende. 1624
Here endith the ffrankeleyne his tale] [Arch. Seld. *extr. ends*]

GROUP G. FRAGMENT VIII.

§ 1. THE SECOND NUN'S TALE.

CORPUS MS.

[*THE PROEM.*] [*No breaks in the Corpus MS between the stanzas.*]

[And next - [Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 215]
-bigynneth the seconde nonne hir tale. &c.

(1)

The ministre *and* norice / vn-to vices 1
whiche that men clepen / in englissh / Idelnesse
that porter of the gate is / of delices
to eschewen / *and* bi hir contrarie to oppresse 4
that is to seyne / bi leoful besynesse
wel oughte we to don / al oure entente
lest that the fende / thorugh Idelnesse vs hente. 7

(2)

ffor he that with his thousand cordes sligħe 8
contenuelly vs waiteth / to bi-clappe
whan he may man / in Idelnesse aspie
he can so lightly cacche him / in his trappe 11
til that a man be hente / right bi the lappe
he nys not ware / the fende hath him in honde
wel oughte vs werche / *and* Idelnesse with-stonde. 14

(3)

And though men dradden neuere / for to die 15
yit se men wel bi reson / doutelese
that Idelnesse is hoten / slogardie
of whiche cometh neuere / noon encrese 18
and sithen that slouth hir holdith in a lese
only for to slepe / *and* ete *and* drynke
and to devouren / al that other swynke [*leaf* 215, *back*] 21

(4)

¶ And for to putten vs / from suche Idelnesse [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
that cause is / of so grete confusion
I haue here don / my feithful besynesse
after the legende / in translacion
right after thi glorious liff / *and* passion
thow with thi garland / wroughte of rose *and* lylye
the mene I / maide / *and* martir / seynt Cecelye.

(5)

¶ And thow that floure art / of virgynes alle
of whom that Bernard / list so wel to write
to the at my bigynnyng / first I calle
thow comforte of vs wrecches / do me endite
thi maidens deth / that was thorugh hir merite
the eternal liff / *and* of the feinde victorie
as men mow after rede / in hir storie.

(6)

¶ Thow maiden *and* moder / doughter of thi sone] [Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extr. ends*]
Thou welle of mercy synful soules cure [leaf 171]
In whom þat god for bounte chees to wone
Thou humble and heih ouer euery creature
Thou nobledest so ferre oure nature
That no desdeyn þe makere hadde of kynde
his sone in blood and fleissch to clope and wynde

(7)

¶ Wiþinne þe cloystre blisful of þine sydes
Took mannes schap þe eterne loue and pees
That of þe trine compas lord and gyde is
Whom erþe and see and heuene out of reles
Ay herien and þou virgine wemmeles
Bare of þy body and dwelledest / mayde pure
The creatour of euery creature

(8)

¶ Assembled is in þi magnificence
Wiþ mercy goodnesse and with such pite
þat þou art þe sonne of excellence
Nouȝt only helpest hem þat prayen þe
But ofte tyme of þin benignite
fful frely er þat men þin helpe beseche
þou gost byforn and art here lyfes leche

(9)

¶ Now help þou meke and blisful faire mayde
Me flemyd wrecche in þis desert of galle
Thenk on þe woman Canaňe þat sayde
That whelpes eten some of þe crommes alle
þat from here lordes table beñ y-falle
And þough þat I þe vnworþy sone of eue
be synful ȝit accepte my byleeue

(10)

And for þat feiþ is deed wiþoute werkes
So for to worchen ȝif me witte and space
þat I be quyt from place þat most derk is
O þou þat art so fair and so ful of grace
Be myn aduocate in so heiȝ a place
Ther as wiþouten ende is longe Osanna
Thou cristes moder and doughter of Anna

(11)

And of þin light my soule kepe in prisoñ
That troubled is by þe contagioun
[of my body / & also bi the wighte. [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
of erthely lust / & fals affeccion] 74
O heuene o refute O saluacioñ [leaf 171, back]
Of hem þat ben in sorwe and in destresse /
Now help for vnto my werk I wol me dresse / 77

(12)

¶ 3et' pray I 3ou þat' reden þat' I write
ffor3eueþ me for I do no diligence
þis ilke story subtil to endite
ffor boþe haue I þe wordes and þe sentence /
Of' hem þat' atte seyntes reuerence /
The story wroot' & solewen hir legende
And pray I 3ou þat' 3e woln my werk' amende

(13) [*THE TALE.*]

ffirst' wolde I 3ou þe name of' seint' Cecile
Expoune as men may in here stories se
It' is to say on englissh heuene lylye
ffor pure chastnesse of' virginite /
Oþer for sche witnesse hadde of' honeste
Of' greue of' conscience and of' good fame
The soote sauour lilye was hire name

(14)

Ouþer Cecile is to say þe way to blynde
ffor sche ensample was by good techynge
Or elles. Cecile is as I writen fynde
Is ioyned by a maner conioygnynge
Of' heuen and lya and heiher in figuringe
The heuen is set' for þought' of' holynesse
And lya for hire lastyng' busynesse /

(15)

Cecile may eek' be sayd in þis manere
Wantynge of' blyndnesse for hire grete light
Of' sapiens and for hir þewes clere
Oþer elles þis maydenes name bright'/
Of' heuen and leos comeþ for which by right'
men mighte þe heuene of' poeple hire calle
Ensample of' goode and wise werkes alle

(16)

ffor leos poeple in englissch is to say
And right' as men may in þis heuene se
þe sonne and moone and þe sterres euery way
Right'-so gostly in þis mayden fre
Seyen þe feiþ of' magnificence
And ekyng' of' helþe and of' sapience [leaf 172]
And sondry werkes bright' of' excellence /

(17)

And right' as þis philosophres wryte
That' heuen is swyft' round and brynnyng'
Right'-so was faire Cecile þe whyte
fful swift' and besy euer in good werkyng'
And round & hool in good perseueryng
And brenne euere in charite lighte /
Now haue I declared ȝou what' sche highte

(18)

This mayden bright' Cecile as hire lyf' saiþ
Was comen of' Romayns and of' noble kynde
And so forþ fostred vp in þe faiþ
Of' crist' and bar his gospel in hire mynde
Sche neuer cessede as I writen fynde
Of' hire prayere and god to loue and drede
Besechinge him to kepe hire maydenhede /

(19)

And what' þis mayden schulde vnto a man
y-wedded be þat' was ful ȝong' of' age
Which þat y-cleped was valerian
And þe day was comen of' hire mariage
Sche fil deuoute and humble /in hire corage
Vnder hire robe of' gold þat' sat' ful faire
And next' hire fleissh sche clad hire in an haire

(20)

And whiles þe Orgles maden melodye
To god allone þus in herte sang' sche
O lord my soule and eek' my body gye
Vnwemmed lest' þat' I confoundid be
And for his loue þat' deyde vpon a tre
Euery secounde or þridde day sche faste
Ay byddyng' in hire orisons ful faste

(21)

The night' com and to bedde sche moste gon
Wiþ hire housbonde as often is þe' manere
And pryuely sche sayde to him anon
O swete and wel biloued spouse dere
Ther is a counseil and ȝe wolde it here /
Which þat' right' fayn I wol vnto ȝou sayn
So þat' ȝe me assure it' nought' to bewrayn [1172, bk]

(22)

Valerian gan faste / vnto hire swere
That' for no cas ne þing' þat' mighte bè
he scholde for no þing' neuer bywreyen hire
And þanne at' erst' þus to him sayde sche
I haue an aungel which þat' loueþ me
That' wiþ gret' loue wheþer so I wake or slepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe

(23)

And if' þat' he may felen out of' drede
[that ye me touche / or loue in vilonye [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
he right anoon wol sle yow / with the dede
and in youre youthe / thus shul ye die
and if that ye / in clene loue me guye]
he wolde ȝou loue as me for ȝour clennesse
And schewe ȝou of' his ioye and his brightnesse

(24)

valerian corrected as god wolde
Answerde a3ein if' I schal truste to þe /
let' me þat' aungel see and him biholde
And if' þat it a verray aungel be
Thanne wol I don as þou hast' preyed me
And if' þou loue anoþer man for soþe /
Right' wiþ þis swerd I wol sle 3ou boþe

(25)

Cecily answerde anon in þis wise
If' þat' 3ou luste þat' aungel schul 3e se
So þat' 3e trowe on crist' and 3ou baptise
Goþ forþ to via apia *quod* sche
þat' from þis toun ne stant' by myles þre /
And to þe pouere folkes þat' þere dwelle /
Sey hem right' þus as þat/ I schal 3ou telle /

(26)

Telle hem þat I Cecile 3ou to hem sent
To schewen 3ou þe goode vrban þe olde
ffor secre needes and fro good entent'
And whan þat' 3e seint vrban han bỹholde /
Telle him þe wordes whiche þat' I 3ou tolde /
And whan þat' he haþ purged 3ou from synne
þanne schal 3e see þat' aungel er 3e twynne

(27)

Valerian is to þat' place y-gon
And right' as him was taught' by his lernyng'
he fond þis holy Vrban þer anon
Among' þese seyntes buriels lotying' .i. latitans
And he anon wiþoute tarying'
Dide his message and whan he hadde tolde
Vrban for ioye gan his handes vpholde

[leaf 173]

(28)

The teeres from his eyhen leet' he falle /
Almighty god O Ihesu crist *quod* he
Sowere of' chaste counseille and herde of' vs alle
þe fruyt' of' þilke seed of' chastite /
þat' þou hast' sowe in Cecile tak' to þe
Lo y-like a busy bee wiþoute gyle
The serueþ ay þin oughne þralle Cecile

(29)

¶ ffor þilke spouse þat' sche tok' but' now /
fful like a fiers leoñ sche sendeþ heere /
As meke as eny lambe was to ȝow /
And wiþ þat' word anon þer gan apeere /
An olde man clad wiþ white cloþes cleere
And hadde a book' wiþ *lettres* of' gold in honde
And gan biforn Valerian to stonde

(30)

Valerian as deed fel doun for drede
Whan he him saugh and him vp hente þo
And on his book' right' þus he gan to rede /
O lord o feiþ o god wiþoute mo[1] [1] Et lamentat' [*is the next line*]
Of' cristendom and fader of' al also
Abouen alle and ouer alle euery where
This wordes alle with golde writen were /

(31)

Whan þis was rad þan sayde þis olde man
leeuest' þou þis þing' or no sey ȝe or nay
I leeue alle þis þing' þan þis [quod tho Valerian [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
for sother thing than this /] I dar wel say
Vnder þe heuene no wigħt/ ne þenke may
þo vanysshed þe olde man he nyste where
And pope vrban him cristned rigħt' þere

(32)

Valerian goþ hom and seintᵗ Cecile
Wiþinne his chambre an aungel stande
þis aungel hadde ofᵗ Rose and ofᵗ lylie
Corounes tuo þe which he bar in hande
And ferstᵗ to Cecile as I vnderstande /
he 3afᵗ þatᵗ oon and after gan he take [leaf 173, back]
þatᵗ oþer to Valerian hire make

(33)

With body clene and wiþ vnwe*mm*yd þou3t /
kepeþ ay wel þis corounes q*uo*d he
ffrom paradys to 3ou haue I hem brou3tᵗ
Ne neuer more schulle þey roten be
¶ Ne leese here swete sauour trusteþ me
Ne neuere wigħtᵗ schal seen hem wiþ his yhe
Butᵗ he be chaste and hate vilonye /

(34)

And þou valerian for þou so sone
Assentedestᵗ to good counseil also
Sey whatᵗ þe luste and þou schaltᵗ haue þy bone /
I haue a broþ*er* quod valerian þo
þatᵗ in þis world I loue no man so
I pray 3ou þatᵗ my broþ*er* may han g*race*
To knowe þe trouþe as I do in þis [place]

(35)

The aungel answerde god likeþ 3oure requeste
And boþe with þe palme ofᵗ martirdome
3e schulle come vnto þe blisful feste
And wiþ þatᵗ word Tiburce his broþ*er* come
And whan þatᵗ he þe sauour vndernome
Which þatᵗ þe roses and þe lylies caste /
Wiþinne his herte he gan to wondre faste /

(36)

And seyde in þis tyme I wondre of' þe ȝeere
Whenne þis swote sauour comeþ so /
And Rosis and lilyes þat' I smelle heere
ffor þough I hadde hem in myn hondes tuo
The sauour might in me no deppere go
þe swete smelle þat' in myn herte I fynde
haþ chaunged me al in anoþer kinde

(37)

valerian sayde tuo corounes han we
Snow whit' and Rose Reed þat' schyneþ cleere
Which þat' þin yhe haþ no might' to see
And as þou smellest' hem þorugh my preyere
So schalt' þou seen hem leeue broþer deere
If' it/ so be þat' þou wolt' wiþouten slouþe
Bileeue aright' and knowe verray trouþe [leaf 174]

(38)

Tiburce answerde saist' þou þis to me
In soþnesse or in drem herkne ȝe þis
In dremes q*uo*d valerian han we be
vnto þis tyme broþer myn y-wys
But' now at' erste oure trouþe dwellyng' is
how wost' þou q*uo*d Tiburce and in what' wyse /
Quod valerian þat' I schal þe deuyse /

(39)

þe aungel of' god haþ me þe trouþe y-taught
Which thou schalt' seen if' þat' þou wolt' reneye
þe ydolis and be clene and elles naught'
And of' þe miracles of' þise corounes tweye
Seint' ambrose in his *preface* lust to seye
Solempnely þis noble doctor deere
Comendiþ it/ and saiþ in þis maneere

(40)

The palme of martirdom for to receyue
Seint Cecile fulfilde of goddes ȝifte
þe worlde and eek hire chambre gan sche weyue
Witnesse Tiburce and Cecyles schrifte/
To which god of his bounte wolde schifte
Corounes two of floures wel smellynge /
And made þe aungel hem þo corounes brynge

(41)

¶ þe mayde haþ brought þise men to blisse aboue
The world haþ wist what it is worþ certeyn
Deuocioñ of chastite to loue
þo schewed him Cecile open and pleyn
That alle ydolis nys but þing in veyn
ffor þey ben dombe and þer-to þey ben deue
And charged him his ydolis for to leue

(42)

¶ Who þat þis troweþ not a beste he is /
Quod þo Tiburce if þat I schal not lye
Sche gan þanne kisse his breste and þat herde þis
And was ful glad he coupe troupe aspye
This day take þe for myn allye
Seyde þis blisful mayde fair and deere
ffor after þat sche sayde as ȝe may heere

(43)

Lo right so þe loue of crist *quod* sche [leaf 174, back]
made me þin broþeres wyf right in þat wyse
Anoon for myn allye here take I þe
Sipenes þat þou wolt[1] þine ydolis despise [1 *ink spilt over the page*]
Go with þy broþer now and þe baptise /
And make þe clene so þat þou mayst beholde
þe aungels face of which þy broþer tolde

(44)

Tiburce answerde and seyde broþer deere
fferst telle me whider I schal and to what man
To whom *quod* he com forþ with right good cheere
I wol þe lede vnto þe pope vrban
To Vrban broþer myn Valerian
Quoþ þo Tiburce wilt þou me þider lede
Me þinkeþ þat it were a wonder dede

(45)

¶ Remenest þou nouȝt vrban *quod* he þo
That is so ofte dampned to be deed
And woneþ in halkes to & fro /
And dar nouȝt ones putte forþ his heed
Men schulle him brenne in a fir so reed
If þat he were founde if þat men might him spye
And we also þat bere him companye

(46)

And whiles we seken þilke diuinyte
þat is y-hyd in heuene priuely
Algate y-brent in þis world schul we be
To whom Cecile answerde bodyly
Men mighte drede wel and skilfully
þis lyf to lese myn owne deere broþer
yif þis were lyuynge oonly and non oþer

(47)

But þer is bettere lyf in oþer place
þat neuer schal be lost ne drede þe nought
Which goddes sone vs tolde þorugh his grace
[that the fadris sone / hath al thing wrought [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
and al that wrought is / with a skilful thought
the goost that from the fader / gan *procede*
hath souled hem / withouten eny drede.

(48)

¶ By worde & bi myracle / godis sone [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
whan he was in this world / declared here
that ther was other liff / there men may wone
to whom answerde Tyburce / O suster dere 333
ne seidist thow right now / in this manere
ther nas but O god / lord in sothfastnesse
and now of thre / how maist thow bere witnesse. 336

(49)

¶ That shal I telle quod she or that I go] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14 extract ends]
Right' as a man hap sapiences pre /
Memorie Ingenie and Intellecte also
So in o beynge of' diuynite / 340
Thre persones right' wel per may be
Tho gan sche him besyliche preche /
Of' cristes come. and of' his peynes teche [leaf 175] 343

(50)

And many poyntes of' his passiõ 344
how goddes sone in pis world was wipholde
To do mankynde pleyn remissiõ
That' was y-bounde in synne and cares colde 347
Al pis ping' sche vnto Tiburce tolde
And after pis Tiburce in good entent
To pope vrban wip Valerian he went 350

(51)

which panked god and wip glad herte & light' 351
he cristned him and made him in pat place
Parfyt' in his lyuynge goddes knight'
And after pis Tiburce gat such grace 354
pat' euery day he seyh in tyme and space
pe aungel of' god and euery maner bone
pat' he god asked it' was sped ful sone 357

(52)

¶ It' were ful hard by ordre for to seyn
how many wondres ihesu for him wrou3t'
But' atte laste to telle schort' and pleyn
þe sergeaunt' of' þe toun of' Rome hem sought'
And hem byforn Almache þe prouost' brought'
Which hem opposede and knew al here entent'
And to þe ymage of' Iubiter he hem sent /

(53)

And sayde who so wol not' Sacrifise
Swap of' his heed þis is my sentence heere /
Anon þise martires þat' I 3ou deuyse /
On Maximius þat' was an officere /
Of' þe Prefectis and of' Corniculere
hem hente and when he forþ þe seintes ledde
himself' he weep for pite þat' he hadde

(54)

¶ Whan maximine hadde herde þe seintes lore /
he gat' hem of' þe tormentoures leue /
And hadde hem in his hous wiþoute more
And wiþ here prechyng' er þat' it/ were eue
þey gonne from þe tormentours to reue /
And from Maximius and from his folk' ilkon
þe false feiþ to trowe in god allon

(55)

Cecile cam whan it' was woxen night' [leaf 175, back]
Wiþ prestes þat' hem cristned alle in feere
And aftirward. whan day was waxen light
Cecile hem sayde wiþ a sobre chere
Now cristes owne knightes leeue and deere
Casteþ alle a wey þe werkes of' derknesse /
And armeþ 3ou in armure of' lightnesse

(56)

ȝe han forsoþe ydon grete bataile
ȝoure is doon ȝoure feiþ han ȝe conserued
Goþ to þe coroune of⁹ lyf⁹ þat⁹ may nouȝt⁹ faille
þe rightful Iuge which þat⁹ ȝe han [served [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
shal yeue hit yow / as ye han it] deserued
And whan þis þing⁹ was sayd as I deuyse
men ladde hem forth to don þe sacrifise /

(57)

But⁹ whan þey were vnto þe place y-brouȝt /
To telle schortly þe conclusiõ
þey nolde encense no sacrifice right nouȝt⁹
But⁹ on here knees þey setten hem adoun
Wiþ humble herte and sad deuocioñ
And losten boþe here hedes in þe place
here soules wenten to þe kyng⁹ of⁹ grace

(58)

This maximius þat⁹ say þis þing⁹ betyde /
Wiþ pitous tales tolde it/ anon right⁹
þat⁹ he here soules saugh to heuen glyde
With aungels ful of⁹ clernes and of⁹ light⁹
And wiþ his word conuerted many a wight⁹
ffor which Almachus dede him so to bete
Wiþ whippe of⁹ leed til he his lyf⁹ gan lete /

(59)

Cecile him took⁹ and buried him anoñ
By Tyburce and Valerian softely
Wiþinne hire heryinge place vnder þe ston
And after þis Almachius hastily
Bad his mynistres fecchen openly
Cecile so sche mighte in his presence
Do sacrifice and Iubiter encense

(60)

But þey conuertid þorugh hire wise lore
Wepten sore and 3auen credence /
Vnto hire word and cryden more and more [leaf 176]
Crist' goddes sone wiþouten difference
his verray god þis is alle oure sentence
þat' haþ so good a seruañt' him to serue
þus wiþ oo vois we trowe þey3 we sterue

(61)

Almachius þat herde al þis speking'
Bad fecche Cęcile þat' he might' hir se
And alþer first' lo þis was his askyng'
What' maner womman artow þo quod he /
I am a gentil womman born quod sche /
I aske quod he þou3 it þe greue
Of' þin religiõn and of' þin byleeue

(62)

Whi þanne bygan 3oure questiõn folily
Quod sche þat' woldest' tuo answers conclude /
In oo demaunde 3e askide lewedly
Almachie answerde to þat' similitude /
[of whens cometh thin answere / so rude] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
Of' whennes quod sche. whan þat' sche was refreyned
Of' conscience and of' good feiþ vnfeyned

(63)

Almachius sayde takest' þou non heede /
Of' þin answere and sche him answerde þus
3oure might' quod sche litel is to drede /
ffor euery mortel mannes power nys
But' y-like a bladdre ful of' wynd y-wys /
ffor wiþ a neldis poynt/ when þat' is blowe
may al þe bost' of' it' be leyd ful lowe /

(64)

fful wrongfully bigan þou *quod* he
And 3it in wrong is þin *per*seuerance
Wost þou nou3t how oure mighty *pri*nces fre
Ben þus coma*u*ndid and maken ordinannce
That eu*ery* cristne wight schal han pena*n*nce
But if þat he his cristendom wiþ-seye
And gon al quyt if he wol it receyue

(65)

¶ 3oure princes erren as 3oure noblen doth
Quod þo Cecile / and a wood sentence
3e make vs gulty and it nys nou3t soþ
ffor 3e þat knowen wel oure Innocence
ffor as moche as we don a reu*e*rence [leaf 176, back]
To crist. and for we bere a cristene name
3e putte on vs a cryme and eek a blame

(66)

But we þat knowen þilke name so
ffor v*er*tuous we may it not say
Almachie answerde chese on of þise tuo
Do sacrifice or cristendom reneyne
þat þou mow now skapen by þat wey
At which þe holy blisful mayde
gan for to laughe and to þe Iuge sche sayde

(67)

O Iuge confuse in þy nycete
Wolt þou þat I reneye Innocence /
To make me a wicked wight quod sche
loo he dissimileþ here in audience /
he stareþ and woodeþ in his aduertence
To whom almachius O Vnseely wrecche /
Ne wost þou nought how fer my might may strecche

(68)

haþ nought oure mighty prince to me y-3ouen
3e boþe power and auctorite /
To make folk to deyen and to lyuen
Why spekest þou so proudly þenne to me
I ne speke it nou3t but stedefastly *quod* sche /
Nought proudly for I say as for my syde
I hate dedly þilke vice of pryde

(69)

¶ And if þou drede nou3t a soþ to heere
þan wol I schewen al openly by right
That þou hast/ maad a ful gret lesyng heere
þou sayst þy princes han 3eue þe might
Boþe to sleen and eek for to quike a wight
þou þat ne mayst but oonly lyf here byreue
þan nast *þer*to neyþer power ne leeue

(70)

But þou mayst see þin princes han þe maked
Ministre of deþ for if þou speke of mo /
þou lyest for þy power is ful naked
Do wey þy boldenesse/ seyde almachius þo
And sacrifice to oure goddes or two [leaf 177]
I ne recche nou3t what wrang þat þou me profre
ffor I can suffre it as a philosophre

(71)

But þilke wronges may I nought endure
þat þou spekest of oure goddes here *quod* he /
Cecile answerde O nyce creature
þou saydest no word syns þou speeke to me
þat I ne knewe *þer*with þy nycete
And þat þou were in eu*ery* maner wyse /
A lewed officer and a vein Iustise

(72)

þer lackeþ noþing' to þin vtter yhen
þat' þou nart' blynd for þing' þat we seen alle
That' is a ston yt' men wel may aspyen
That ilke ston a god þou wilt' it calle
I rede þe let' þin hond vpon it' falle
And taste it' wel and' stoon þou schalt' it fynde /
Syns þat' þou sixt' it nought' wiþ þin yʒen blynde /

(73)

It is a schame þat' þe poeple schalt'
So skorne þe and lawhe at' þy folye /
ffor comunely wo*mm*en woot' it wel ouer al
þat' mighty god is in his heuene's hihe
And þese ymages wel þanne mayst' þou aspye
To þe ne to hemself' may þey not' p*ro*fyte
ffor in here effecte þey be not' worþ a myte

(74)

þis and such o*þer* wordes seyde sche /
and he wax wroþ and bad þey schulde hire lede /
home to hire hous and in hire hous q*uod* he
Brenne hire in a fire wiþ fla*mm*es reede
And as he bad right' so was don in dede
And in a bathe þey gan hire faste scheten
And night' and day gret' fuyr vnder þey beetyn

(75)

Al þe longe night' and eek' þe day also /
ffor alle þe fuyr and eek' þe baþes hete /
Sche satte al colde and felt' of' it/ no wo
Ne made hire a drop nouʒt' for to swete /
But' in þat' baþe hire lyf' sche moste lete /
ffor he Almachie wiþ ful wikked entent' [leaf 177, back]
To slen hure in þe bath his sonde sent

(76)

þre strokes in þe necke he smot' hire þo
The tormento*ur* but' for no maner chaunce
he might' not' smyten al hire necke a tuo
And for þer was þat' tyme an ordynaunce
That no man scholde do man such penañce
þe ferþe strook' to smyten softe or sore
þis tormento*ur* ne durste nomore

(77)

But' half' ded wiþ hire necke koruen þere /
he laft' hir lye and in his wey he went'
þe cristne folke whiche abouten hire were /
Wiþ scheetes home ful faire hire hent'
þre dayes lyued sche in þis torment
And neuer cessed hem þe feiþ to teche
þat' sche hadde fostred hem sche gan to p*reche*

(78)

And hem sche ȝaff' hire moebles and hire þing'
And to þe pope vrban *bitok' hem þo* /
And sayde þus I *askede þis of' heuen king'*
To haue respyt' þre *dayes and no mo* /
To recomande to ȝou er þat' *I go*
þise soules lo and þat' *I mighte do wirche*
here of' myn hous *perpetuelliche a chirche*.

(79)

Seint vrban wiþ his deaknes priuely
The body fette and buried it by nighte
Among' his oþere seintes honestely
hire hous þe chirche of' seint' Cecile highte
Seynt' vrban halwed it' as he wel mighte
In þe which in to þis day in noble wyse /
Men don to cryst' and to his seintz *ser*uise

¶ Here endeþ Seint' Ceciles Tale /

[on leaf 177, back] ¶ Hic incipit fabula Canonici

Whan ended was þe lyf of seint Cecile
Er we fully hadde ryden fyue myle
At Boghtoñ vnder þe blee. vs gan atake /
A man þat cloþed was in cloþes blake
And vnder þat he hadde a whit surplys
his hakeney þat was al pomel grys [leaf 178]
So swette þat it wonder was to see
It semed he hadde priked myles þre
þe hors eek þat his ȝoman rood vpon
So swette þat vnneþe mighte he gon
Aboute þe peytrel stood þe foom ful hiȝe
he was of fome al flekked as a pye
A male twyfold on his croper lay
It semed þat he caryed lytel aray
Al light for somer rood þis worþy man
And in myn herte wondren I bygan
What þat he was til þat I vnderstood
how þat his cloke was sewed to his hood
ffor which whan I longe hadde avised me /
I demed him som chanoñ for to be /
his hat hyng at his bak doun by a las /
ffor he hadde ryde more þan trot or pas /
he hadde ay priked lyk as he were wood
A clote leef he hadde vnder his hood
ffor swot and for to kepe his heed from hete
But it/ was ioye for to seen him swete /
his forhed dropped as a stillatorie
Were ful of plaunteyne and of peritorie

And whan þat' he cam he bigan to crye
God saue q*uod* he þis Ioly companye
ffaste haue I priked q*uod* he for ȝoure sake
By cause þat' I wolde ȝou ou*er*take /
To ryden in þis merye companye
His ȝoman eek' was ful of' curtesye
And sires now in þe morwe tyde /
Out' of' ȝoure ostellerye I sayȝ ȝou ryde
And warned heer my lord and my souerayn
Which þat' to ryde wiþ ȝou is ful fayn
ffor his disport' he loueþ daliaunce
ffrend for þy warnyng' god ȝiue þe good chaunce
Sayde oure oost' certes it' wolde seeme /
Thy lord were wys and so I may wel deme / [leaf 178, back]
he is ful ioeunde also dar I lay
Kan he ought' telle a merye tale or tway
Wiþ which he glade may þis companye
Who sire . my lord ? ȝe ȝe wiþoute lye
he can of merþe and eek' of' Iolite
Nought' but' ynough also sire trusteþ to me
And ȝe him knewe als wel as do I
ȝe wolde wondre how wel and þriftyly
he couþe werke and þat' in sondry wyse
he haþ take on him many sondry aprise
Which were ful hard for eny þat' is heere /
To bringe aboute but' þey of' him it' lere /
As homely as he ryt' amonges ȝou
If' ȝe him knewe it' wolde bė ȝoure prow /
ȝe nolde not' forgon his aqueintance
ffor mochil good I dar leye in balañce
Al þat' I haue my possessiõ
he is a man of' heigh discrecioñ
I warne ȝou wel he is a passynge man
Wel quoþ oure host' I pray þe telle me þan
Is he a Clerk' or noon telle what' he is
Nay he is gretter þan a clerk' y-wys

Seyde ȝe ȝoman and in wordes fewe
Ost' and of his craft' somwhat' I wol ȝou schewe
I say my lord can such a sotilte
But' alle his crafte ȝe may not' wite at' me
And somwhat' helpe I ȝit' to his worchinge
That' al þis ground which þat' we ben on rydynge
Til þat' we come to Caunturbury toun
he coupe al clene turne it/ vp se doun'
And paue it' al of' siluer and of' gold
And whan þis ȝoman hadde þus y-told
vnto oure hoost' // he seyde benedicite
þis þing' is wonder merueylous to me
Siþens þat' þi lord is of' so heigh prudence /
By cause of' which men scholde him reuerence / [leaf 179]
That' of' his worschipe rekkeþ he so lyte
his ouer sloppe / nys nouȝt' worþ a myte /
As in effecte to him so mote I go
It' is al baudy and to-tore also
Whi is þi lord so sluttissche I þe prey
And is of' power better cloþes to bey
If' þat' his dede acorde wiþ þy speche
Telle me þat and þat' I þe byseche /
Why *quod* þis ȝeman wherto aske ȝe me /
God help me so for he schal neuer y-the
But' I wol not' avowe þat' I say
And *per*fore kepe it secre I ȝou pr*ay*
he is to wys in faiþ as I bileeue
And þat' is ouer doon it' nyl not' preue
And right' as clerkes sein it' is a vice /
Wherfore in þat' I holde him lewed and nyce
ffor whan a ma[n] haþ ouer gret' a witt
fful often it happeþ to mysvsen it'
So doþ my lord and þat me greueþ sore
God it' amende I can seye now no more
Ther-of' no fors goode ȝoman *quod* oure hoost'
Siþens of' þe connyng' of þy lord þou woost

Telle how he doþ I pray þe hertely
Siþens þat' he is so crafty and so sly
Wher dwellen ȝe if' to telle be
In Subarbes of' a toun q*uod* he
lurkyng' in hernes and in lanes blynde
Where þise Robbers and þeeues be kynde
holden here preuy ferful resydence
As þay þat' dur nat' schewe here p*re*sence
So fare we if' I schal saye þe soþe
ȝit' q*uod* oure hoste lat' me talke toþe
Why art' þou discoloured on þy face
Peter q*uod* he god ȝiue hit' harde grace
I am so vsed in þe fyre to blowe
That' it haþ chaunged my colour as I trowe [leaf 179, back]
I nam nat' wont' in myrour to prye
But' swynke sore and lerne to multiplye
We bloundren euer and pouren in þe fyr
And for al þat' we faillen of' oure desir
ffor euer we lacken oure conclusiõ
To moche folk' we ben but' Illusiõ
And borwe gold be it' a pound or tuo
Or ten or twelue or manye so*mm*es mo
And make hem wenen atte leste weye
þat' of' a pound we couþe make tweye
ȝit' is it' fals and ay we han good hope
It' for to don and after it' we grope
But' þat' science is so fer vs biforn
We mowe not' al þoghñ we hadde it' sworn
It' ouertake it'[1] slyt' awey so faste [[1] *a second* it *scrateht out*]
It' wole us make beggeres atte laste
Whil þis ȝoman was þus in þis talking'
þis chanoñ drough him ner and herde alle þing'
Which þat' þis ȝoman spak' for suspecioñ
Of' mennes speche euere hadde þis Chanoñ
ffor Catoñ seithñ he þat' gulty is
Demeþ alle þing' be spoke of' him ywys

By cause of' þat' he gan so neigh to drawe /
his 3oman. þat' he herde alle his sawe /
And þus he sayde vnto his 3oman þo
holde now þy pees and speke wordes no mo /
ffor if' þou dost' þou schalt' it dere abye
Thou sclaundrest' me here in þis compaignye
And eek' discouerest' þat' þou scholdest' hyde
3ee *quod* oure hoost' telle on what' so betyde
Of' alle þis þretyng' recche I nat' a myte
I faiþ quod he no more do I but' a lite
And whan þis Chanoñ say it' wolde nat' be
But' his 3oman wolde telle his priuyte
he fledde away for verray sorwe and schame /
A *quod* þe 3oman here schal aryse a game [leaf 180]
Al þat' I can anon right/ wol I telle
Siþens he is gon þe foule feend him quelle /
ffor neuer her after wol I wiþ him mete
ffor peny ne for pound I 3ou bihecte /
he þat' me broughte ferst' vnto þat game /
Er þat' he deye sorwe haue he and schame
ffor it' is ernest' to me by my fayþ
That' feele I wel what so eny man saiþ /
And 3it' for al my smert' and al my greef'
ffor al my sorwe labour and mescheef'
I couþe neuer leue it in no wyse
Now wolde god my witt/ mighte suffise
To tellen al þat' longeþ to þat art'
But' naþeles 3it' wol I telle a part'
Syþens þat' my lord is gon I wol not' spare
Such þing' as I knowe I wol declare /

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*THE PREAMBLE.*]

With þis chanoñ dwelled haue I seuen ȝeer
And of' his science am I neuer þe neer
Al þat' I hadde I haue y-lost' þerby
And god wot' so haue many mo þan I
þer I was wont' to be right' freissch and gay
Of' cloþing' and of' good array
Now may I were an hose vpon myn heed
And wher my colour was boþe freissh and reed
Now is it' wan and of' a ledene hewe
Who so it vseth sore schal he rewe
And of my swynk' ȝit' blered is myn yȝe
lo which auauntage it is to multiplye
That' slydynge science haþ me maad so bare
That' I haue no good where þat' euer I fare
And ȝit' I am endetted so þer by
Of' gold þat/ I haue borwed trewely
þat' whil I lyue I schal it' quite neuere /
lat' euery man be war by me for euere
What maner man þat casteþ him þerto
If' he continue I holde his þrifte y-do [leaf 180, back]
So help me god þer-by schal he not' wynne
But' empte his purs and make his wittes þinne
And whan he þorugh his madnesse and folye
haþ lost' his owne good þorugh Iepardye
þanne he exciteþ oþer men þerto
To lese here good as himself' haþ do
ffor vnto schrewes Ioye it is and ese
To haue here felawes in peyne and disese

Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk
Of þat no charge I wol speke of oure werk
Whan we ben þere as we schulle exercise
Oure eluysshe craft; we semen wonder wise
Oure termes ben so clergeal and so queynte
I blowe þe fuyr. til þat myn herte feynte
What scholde I telle eche proporcioñ
Of þinges whiche þat we worchen vppon
As on fyue or sixe vnces may wel be
Of siluer or of som oþer quantite
And besye me to telle ȝou þe names
Of Opyment brent bones yren squames
That in to poudre grounden ben ful smal
And in an erþen pot how þat put is al
And salt y-put in and also paupere
Bifore þise poudres þat I speke of here
And wel y-couered wiþ a laumpe of glas
And of muche oþer þing what þat þer was
And of þe pot and glas englutyng
That of þe aier mighte passe no þing
And of þe esy fyr and smert also
Which þat was mad and of þe care and wo
þat we hadde in oure matiers sublymynge
And amalgamynge and Calcenynge
Of quyk syluer y-cleped mercurie crude
ffor alle oure sleightes we can nouȝt conclude
Oure orpymed and sublimed mercurie
Oure grounde litarge eek on þe porphirie [leaf 181]
Of ech of þise of vnces a certayn
Nouȝt helpeþ vs oure labour is in vain
Ne eek oure spirites ascencioun
Ne eek oure matieres þat lyn al fixe a doun
Mowen in oure werkynge no þing vs auayle
ffor lost is alle oure labour and trauaile
And al þe cost on twenty deuele wey
Is lost also which we vpon it ley

þer is also many anoþer þing/
þat' is to oure crafte aperteynyng'
þoughⁿ I by ordre hem here ne reherse can
By cause þat' I am a lewed man
3it' wol I telle hem as þey come to mynde
Thoughⁿ I ne kan nat' seţte hem in here kynde
As boole armonyak' verdegres Boras
And sondry vesseles made of' erþe and glas
Oure vrinales and oure descensories
Violes creseletes and sublimatories
Concurbites and Alembykes eeke
And oþer swiche deere ynoughⁿ a leeke
Nat' needeþ it/ to rehersen hem alle
Wateres Rubysynge and boles galle
Arsynek' Sal armonyak' and Brymston
And herbes couþe I telle eek' many oon
As Egrymoyne Valerian and lunarie
And oþer suche if' þat' me luste tarie
Oure laumpes brennyng' boþe night' and day
To bringe aboute oure craft' if' þat' we may
Oure fornays eke of' Calcynacioⁿ
And of' watres albyficacioⁿ
.vnslekked lym chalk' and glaire of' an ey
Poudres dyuers aisshes dong' pisse and cley
Seryd pokettes Sal petre and vitriole
And diuerse fyres made of' woode and cole
Salt' tartre Alcaly and Salt' preparat
And combust' matieres and coagulat [leaf 181, back]
Cley maad wiþ horses or mannes heer and oyle
Of' tartre alym glas berme wort' and argoyle
Rysalgar and oþer matieres enbykynge
And eek' of' oure matieres encorporynge
And eek' of' Siluer Citrynacioⁿ
Oure sementynge and fermentacioⁿ
Oure Ingotes testes and many mo
I wol 3ou telle as was me taughⁿt' also /

þe foure spirites and þe bodyes seuene /
By ordre ofte as I herde my lord neuene
The fyfte spirit quyk siluer called is
þe seconde orpiment. þe þridde y-wys
Sal armoniak and þe ferþe bremston
The bodyes seuene eek to hem heere anon
Sol gold is and luna siluer we threpe /
Mars yren mercurie quyk syluer we clepe
Saturnus leed and Iubiter is tyn
And venus Copur by my fader kyn
This cursede craft who so wol exercise
he schal no good han þat may him suffise
ffor alle þe good he spendeþ þer aboute
he lese schal þer-of haue I no doute
Who so þat list to outen his folye
let him come forþ and lerne to multiplie
And euery man þat haþ aught in his cofre
lat him appere and wexe a philosophre
As-scaunce þat craft is so light for to lere
Nay nay god woot al be he monk or frere /
Preste or Chanoñ or eny oþer wight
þough he sitte at his book boþe day and night
In lernyng of þis eluyssh nyce lore /
Al is in veyn and par de moche more
Is to lerne a lewed man þis sotilte
ffy speke nouȝt þerof for it/ wol not be
Al cowde he letterure or coube he non
As in effecte he schal fynde it al on [leaf 182]
ffor boþe tuo by my saluacioñ
Concluden in multiplicacioñ
I-liche wel whan þey han alle y-do
This is to seyn þey faille boþe tuo
ȝit forȝat I to moché rehersaille
Of watres corosif and of lymaille
And of bodyes mollificacioñ
And also of heré induracioñ

Oyles ablucioñ and metalle fusible
To tellen alle wolde passen ony bible
þat owher is wherfore as for þe beste
Of alle þise names now wole I me reste
ffor as I trowe I haue ȝou told ynoughh
To reysen a feende loke he neuer so roughh
A nay let be þy philosophres ston
Elixir cleped we sechen faste echoon
ffor hadde we him þan were we syker ynoughh
But vnto god of heuene I make avow
ffor alle oure craft whan we han al y-do
And al oure sleighte / he wol not come vs to
He haþ vs maad spende moche good
ffor sorwe of which almost we wexen wood
But þat good hope crepeþ in oure herte
Supposyng euere þoughh we sore smerte
To be releuyd by him aftirward
Supposyng and hope is scharp and hard
I warne ȝou wel it is to seken euere
þat future temps haþ maad men disseuere
In trust þer-of fram al þat euer þey hadde
ȝit of þat art þey coupe not wexe sadde
ffor vnto hem it is a bitterswete
So semeþ it for ne hadde þey but a scheete
Which þat þey mighte wrappe hem In a night
And a bak to walken in by day light
þey wolde hem sellen and spenden on þis craft
They can nouȝt stynte til no þing be laft [leaf 182, back]
And euermore wher þat euer þey gon
men may hem knowe by smel of Bremston
ffor al þe world þey stynken as a goot
here sauour is so Rammissh and so hoot
That þoughh a man from hem a myle be
That sauour wol enfecte him trusteþ me
lo þus by smellyng and by þred bare array
If þat men list þis folk þey knowe may

And if a man wol aske him priuely
Why þey ben cloþed so vnþriftily
Right anon þey wole rownen in his eere
And seye if þay aspyed were
Men wolde hem sle by cause of here science
lo þus þis folk bytrayen Innocence
Passe ouer þis I go my tale vnto
Er þen þe pot be on þe fyr y-do
Of metals wiþ a certein quantite
My lord hem tempreþ and no man but he
Now he is gon. I dar say boldely
ffor as men sein he can do craftily
Algate I wot wel he haþ such a name
And ȝit ful ofte he renneþ in þe blame
And wite ȝe how ful ofte it happeþ so
The pot tobrekeþ and far wel alle is go
þise metals ben of so gret violence /
Oure walles may not make hem resistence
But if þey were wrouȝt of lym and ston
þey percen so and þoruȝ þe wal þey gon
And some of hem synken in to þe ground
þus haue we lost by tymes many a pound
And somme are scatered al þe floor aboute
Somme lepen in to þe roof wiþouten doute
þough þat þe fende nought in oure sighte him schewe
I trowe þat he wiþ vs be þat schrewe
In helle wher þat he is lord and sire /
Ne is þer no more woo ne angur nor Ire [leaf 183]
Whan þat oure pot is broke as I haue sayd
Euery man chit and halt him yuel payd
Som seyde it was long on þe fyr makyng
Somme sayde nay it was on þe blowyng
þan was I fered for þat was myn office
Straw *quod* þe þridde ȝe ben lewed and nyce
It was not tempred as it oughte be /
Nay *quod* þe ferþe stynt and herkne me

By cause oure fyr was nat' made of' bech
þat' is þe cause non o*þer* so peech
I can not' telle wher-on it is a long'
But' wel I wot' gret' stryf' is vs among'
What' q*uod* my lord þer is nomore to done /
Of þise p*er*iles I wil be war eft' sone /
I am right' syker þat' þe pot' was crased
Be as be may be 3e no þing' amased
As vsage is let' swope þe floor as swyþe
Pluk' vp 3our herte and be 3e glad and bliþe
The mullok' on an heep y-swoped was
And on þe floor cast' a kaneuas
And al þis mullok' in a Syue y-þrowe
And y-sifted and y-plucked many a þrowe
Parde q*uod* oon som what' of' oure metal
3et' is þer heere þough we haue not' all
And þough þis þing' myshapped haþ as now
Anoþer tyme it may be wel ynow
vs moste putte oure good in aduenture /
A marchañt' parde may not' ay endure /
Trustneþ me wel in his p*rosper*ite
Som tyme his good is drowned in þe see /
And som tyme comeþ it' sauf' vnto þe londe
Pees q*uod* my lord þe nexte tyme I wol fonde
To bringe oure crafte alle in anoþ*er* plyt'
And but' I do sires lat' me haue þe wyte
Ther was defaute in somwhat' wel I woot'
Anoþ*er* seyde þe fyr was ouer hoot' [leaf 188, back]
But' be it' hoot' or cold I dar seye þis
þat' we concluden eu*er*emore amys /
We faille of' þat' which þat' we wolde haue /
And in oure madnesse eu*er*emore we raue
And whan we ben togidere euerich on
Euery man semeþ as wys as Salomon
But' alle þing' which þat' semeþ as þe goolde /
Is nat golde as I haue herd it' tolde /

Ne euery appul þat is fair at ye
Ne is not good what so men clappe or crye /
Right so lo fareþ it amonges vs
he þat semeþ þe wysest by Ihesus
Is most fool whan it comeþ to þe preef
And he þat semeþ trewest is a þeef
That schul ȝe knowe er þat I fro ȝou wende /
By þat I of my tale haue maad an ende

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther is a chanoun of' Religio*un*
Amonges vs wolde enfecte al a toun 973
þough̄ it' as gret' were as was Nynyue /
Rome Alisandre. Troye and oþre þre
his sleightes and his infinite falsnesse /
þer couþe noman writen as I gesse / 977
þough̄ þat' he migh̄te lyuen a þousend ȝeer
In all*e* þis world of' fal[s]nesse nys his peer
ffor in his termes he wole him so wynde
And speke his wordes in so sleigh̄ a kynde 981
Whan he co*m*mune schal wiþ ony wigh̄t'
What' he wol make him dote anon righ̄t'
But' it' þe feend be as his seluen is /
fful many a man haþ he begyled er þis 985
And wile if' þat' he may lyue a while /
And ȝit' men ryden and gon ful many a myle
him for to seeke and haue his aqueyntance
Nouȝt' knowyng' of' his false gouernance / 989
And if' ye lust' to ȝiue me audience
I wol it' tellen here in ȝoure p*re*sence [leaf 184]
But' worschipful Chanon̄ religious
Ne demeþ nouȝt' þat' I sclaundre ȝour hous 993
Al þough̄ my tale of' a Chanon̄ be
Of' eu*er*y ordre som schrewe is parde
And god forbede þat' all*e* a compaignie
Scholde rewe a synguler mannes folye 997
To sclaundre ȝou it' is not' myn entent'
But' to correcten þat' mys I-ment'

This tale nas nat' oonly told for 3ou
But' eek' for oþer mo 3e wot' wel how
That' amonges cristes apostles twelue
Ther was no traytour but' Iudas himselue
þanne why scholde þe remenañt' alle haue blame
That' gulteles were by 3ou sey I þe same
Sauf' oonly þis if' 3e wiln herkne me
If' ony Iudas in 3oure couent' be
Remeueþ him by tyme I 3ou rede
If' schame or losse may causen ony drede
And beþ no þing' displesed I 3ou pray
But' in þis caas herkneth what' I say

IN londoñ was a prest' an annueler
That' þer-Inne dwelled hadde many a 3eer
Which was so plesañt / and so seruisable /
Vnto þe wyf' wher he was at' þe table
That' sche wolde suffre him no þing' for to pay
ffor bord nor cloþing' wente he non so gay
And spendyng' siluer had he right' ynough
þer-of' no force I wol procede as now /
And telle forþ my tale of' þe Chanoñ
þat' brou3te þis prest to confusioñ

This false Chanoñ cam vpon a day
vnto þe prestes chambre þer he lay
Bysechingʳ him to lene him a certeyn
Of' golde and he wold quite it' him ageyn
leneþ me a mark' q*uod* he but' dayes þre
And at' my day I wol it' quite þe [leaf 184, back]
And if' so be þat' þou fynde me fals
Anoþer day hang' me vp by þe hals
This prest' him tok' a mark' and þat' as swiþe
And þis Chanoun him þanked often siþe
And took' his leue and wente forth his wey
And atte þridde day brou3t' his money
And to þis prest' he took' þis gold a3ein
Ther-of' þis prest' was glad and fayn

Certes q*uod* he no þing' anoyeth me
To lene a man a noble or tuo or þre
Or what' þing' were in my possessiõ
Whan he so trewe is of' condicioñ
þat' in no wise he breke wole his day
To swich a man I can neuer say nay
What' q*uod* þis Chanoñ scholde I be vntrewe
Nay þat' were þing' fallen al of' þe newe
Trouþe is a þing' þat' I wol euer kepe /
Vnto þe day in which þat' I schal crepe
in to my graue and elles god forbede
Bileeueþ þis as siker as is 3oure Crede
God þanke I and in good tyme be it sayd
þat' þer was neuer man 3it' euel payd
ffor gold ne siluer þat' he to me lente
Ne neuere falshede in myn herte I mente
And sire q*uod* he now of' my priuyte
Siþens 3e so goodlich haue ben to me
And kiþed to me so gret' gentilnesse
Somwhat' to quite with 3oure kyndenesse
I wol 3ou schewe and if' 3ou lest' to leere /
I schal it' schewe to 3ou anon right' heere
how I kan worchen in philosophie
Takeþ good heed 3e schuln seen wel at' ye
That' I wol don a maystry ar I go
3e quoþ þe prest' / 3e sire and wil 3e so
Marie þer of' I p*ray* 3ou hertily
At' 3oure comaundeme*nt*' sire trewely [leaf 185]
Quoþ þe Chanoñ and elles god forbede
lo how þis þeef' couþe his seruise beede
fful soþ it' is þat' such profred seruise
Stynkeþ as witnessen þise olde wise
And þat' ful sone I wol it' verefye
In þis Chanoñ is roote of' alle treccherie
þat' eueremore delyt' haþ and gladnesse/
Suche feendly þoughtes in his herte impresse /

how cristes poeple he may to meschief' bringe
God kepe vs from his fals dissimilynge
What' wiste þis prest' wiþ whom þat' he delte
Ne of' his harm comynge no þing' he felte
O sely prest' o sely Innocent
Wiþ coueytise anon þou schalt' be blent'
O graceles ful blynd is þy conceyt'
No þing' artow war of' þe deceyt'
Which þat' þis fox y-schapen haþ to þe
his wyly wrenches þou mayst' nouȝt' fle
Wher-fore to go to þe conclusioñ
þat' referreþ to þi confusioñ
vnhappy man anon I wol me hiȝe
To telle þin vnwitte and þy folye
And eek' þe falsnesse of' þat' oþer wrecche
As ferforþ as my connynge wol strecche
This Chanoñ was my lord ȝe wolde weene
Sire oste in faith and by þe heuen quene
It' was anoþer chanoun and nat' he
That' can an hundred fold more sotyltee
he haþ bytrayed folkes many tyme
Of' his falsnesse it/ dulleþ me to Ryme
Euer whan I speke of' his falshede
ffor schame of' him my chekes wexen reede
Algates þey bygynne for to glowe
ffor reednesse haue I now right' wel I knowe
In my visage for fumes diuerse
Of' metals whiche ȝe haue herd me reherce [leaf 185, back]
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse /
Now take heede of' þis Chanoñs cursednesse
Sire quod he to þe prest' lat' ȝoure man gon
ffor quyk' siluer þat' wé it' hadde anon
And lat' him bringe vnces tuo or þre
And whan hè comeþ as faste schul ȝe see
A wonder þing' which ȝe say neuer ar þis
Sire quod þe prest' it' schal ben don y-wys

he bad his seruañt fechen him his þing
And he al redy was at his biddyng
And wente him forþ and cam anon agayn
Wiþ þis quyk siluer schortly for to sayn
And tok þis vnces þre to þe Chanoñ
And he it leyde faire and wel a doun
And bad þe seruañt coles for to bringe
þat he anon mighte go to his worchinge
The coles right anon weren y-fette
And þis chanoñ tok out a crosselette
Of his bosom and schewed it þe prest
This Instrument quod he which þat þou seest
Tak in þin hond and put þiself þer Inne
Of þis quyk siluer an vnce and here bygynne
In þe name of crist to wexe a Philosophre
Ther ben ful fewe which þat I wolde profre
To schewen hem þus mochel of my science
ffor ȝe schuln seen heere by experience
þat þis quyk siluer I wol mortefye
Right in ȝoure sight anon wiþoute lye
And make it as good siluer and as fyn
As þer is ony in ȝoure purs or myn
Or elles where and make it malliable/
And elles holde me fals and vnable
Amonges folk euere to appere
I haue a poudre here þat coste me deere
schal make al good for it is cause of all
My connynge which þat I ȝou schewe schall [leaf 186]
Voydeth ȝoure man and lat him be þeroute /
And schitte þe dore whiles we ben aboute /
Oure pryuyte þat noman vs espie
Whiles we werken in þis philosophie /
Al as he bad fulfilled was in dede /
This ilke seruañt anon right out ȝede
And his maistrer schitte þe dore anon
And to here labour speedily þey gon

This prest' at' þis cursed chanōns byddyng'
Vpon þe fire anon sette þis þing'
And blew þe fyr and busyed him ful faste
And þis chanoñ in to þis Crosselet' caste
A poudre not' I wher-of' þat' it' was
I-maad oþer of' chalk' oþer of' glas
Or som what' elles was not' worþ a flye
To blynde wiþ þis prest' and bad him hye
þise cōles for to couchen al aboue
þe cressclet' for in tokne þat' I þe loue
Quoþ þis Chanoñ þine hondes tuo
Schulle worche alle þing' which as schal be do
Graunt mercy quod þe prest' and was ful glad
And couchede coles as þe Chanoñ bad
And whils he besy was þis feendly wrecche
þis false Chanoñ þe foule feend him fecche
Out' of' his bosom took' a bechene cole /
In which ful sotilly was maad an hole
And þer Inne put' was of' siluer lymaille
An vnce and stopped was wiþoute faille
This hole wiþ wex to kepe þe lymaille In
And vnderstondeþ þat' þis false gyn
Was not' made þere but' it was maad bifore
And oþere þinges I schal telle more /
here aftirward which þat' he wiþ him brought̄e
Er he cam þer to begyle him he þought̄e
And so he dide er þey wente a twynne /
Til he hadde torned him couþe he not' blynne. [leaf 186, back]
It' dulleþ me whan. þat' I of' him speke
On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke /
If' I wiste how. but' he is heer and þere /
he is so variaunt' þat' he abyt' no where /
But' takeþ heed now sires for goddes loue
He took' his cole of' which I spak' aboue.
And in his hond he bar it' priuely
And whiles þe prest' couchide busily

The coles as I tolde 3ou er þis /
This Chanoñ sayde freend 3e don amys
This is nought' couched as it' ought̃e be
But' sone I schal amenden it' *quod* he
Now lat me medle *per*wiþ but a while
ffor of' 3ou haue I pite by seint' Gyle
3e ben right' hoot' I se wel how 3e swete
haue heer a cloþ and wype awey þe wete
And while þat' þe prest' him wyped has
This Chanoñ took' his cole I schrewe his fas
And leyde it' vppon abouen þe myddeward
Of' þe Crosselet' and blew wel aftirward
Til þat' þe coles gonne faste brenne
Now 3if' vs drinke *quod* þe Chanoñ þenne
as swiþe it' schal be wel I vndertake
Sitte we doun and let' vs merie make
And whan þe Chanoñs bechene cole
Was brent' alle þe lymail out' of' þe hole
In to þe Crosselet' anon fel doun
And so it' moste neede by resoñ
Syns it' so euene aboue couched was
But' *per*of' wiste no þing' þe prest' allas
he demed alle þe coles liche goode
ffor of' þe sleight' no þing' he vnderstoode
And whan þis alkamistre say his tyme
Riseþ vp sire prest' and stondeþ byme
And for I wot' wel Ingot' haue 3e non
Goþ walkeþ forþ and bring' a chalk' ston [leaf 187]
ffor I wol make it' of' þe same schappe
þat' is an Ingot' if' I may haue happe
And bring wiþ 3ou a bolle oþer a panne
fful of' water and 3e schul see þanne
How þat' oure busynesse schal happe & preeue
And 3it' for 3e schul haue no mysbyleeue
Ne wrong' conceyt' of' me in 3oure absence
I wol not' ben out' of' 3oure *pre*sence

But' go with 3ou and come with 3ou agayn
The chambre dore schortly for to sayn
þey opeynd and schette and wente forþ here weye
And forþ wiþ hem þey caryed þe keye
And comen agayn wiþouten eny delay
What' scholde I tarie al þe longe day
he took' þe chalk' and schoop it' in þe wyse
Of' an yngot' as I schal 3ou deuyse
I say he took' out' of' his owne sleeue
A teyne of' Siluer euele mote he cheeue
Which þat' was but' an vnce of' weight
And takeþ heede now of' his cursed sleight
he schop his Ingot' in lengþe and in brede
Of' þe theyne wiþouten eny drede
So slyly þat' þe prest' it not' aspyde
And in his sleeue again he gan it' hyde
And from þe fyre took' vp his matiere /
And in to þe Ingot' it' putte wiþ merye cheere
And in to þe watir vessel he it' caste
Whan þat' him liste and bad þe prest' as faste
loke what' þer' is / put' in þin hond and grope
Thou schalt' fynde þere siluer as I hope
What' deuyl of helle schuld it' elles be
Schafyng' of' siluer siluer is *par*de
he putte in his hond and took' vp a teyne
Of' siluer fyn and glad in *euery* veyne
Was þis prest' whan he saugh þat' it was so
Goddes blessyng' and his modres also [leaf 187, back]
And alle halwes haue 3e sire Chanoñ
Seyde þe *prest'* and I here malisoñ
But' and 3e vouche sauf' to teche me
þis noble crafte and þis sotilte
I wol be 3oure in alle þat' euer I may
Quoþ þe Chanoñ 3it' wol I make assay
The seconde tyme þat' 3e mowe take heede
And ben expert' of' þis and in 3oure neede

Anoþer day in myn absence /
þis discipline and þis crafty science
¶ let' take anoþer vnce q*uod* he þo
Of' quyk' siluer wiþoute wordes mo
And do þerwiþ as ȝe han don ar þis
Wiþ þat' oþer which þat' now siluer is
þis prest' him busieþ in al þat' he can·
To don as þis Chanōn þis cursede man
Comaundeþ him and faste blew. þe fire
ffor to come to þeffecte of' his desire
And þis Chanōn right' in þe mene while
Al redy was þis prest' eft' to begyle
And for a contynaunce in his hond bar
An holough stikke tak' heede and be war
In þe ende of' which an vnce and no more
Of' siluer lymaile put' was al bifore
Was in his coole and stopped wiþ wex wel
ffor to kepe in his lymayl euery del
And whiles þis prest' was in his businesse
This Chanōn wiþ his stikke gan him dresse
To him anon and his poudre caste In
As he dede er þe deuel out' of' his skyn
him torne I pray to god for his falshede
ffor he was euer fals in oþe and dede
And wiþ his stikke aboue þe crosselette
þat' was ordeigned wiþ þat false gette
he stéreþ þe coles til it' relente gan
The wax agayn þe fyr as euery man [leaf 188]
But' it' a fool be woot' wel and moot' needе
And al þat' in þe hole was out ȝede
And in to þe Crosselet' hastily it' fel
The prest' supposede noþing' but wel
But' busyed him faste and was wonder fayn
Supposyng' nouȝt' but' trouþe soþ to sayn
he was so glad I can nouȝt' expresse
In no maner his merþe and his gladnesse

And þe chanoñ he profred eft' sone
Body and good ȝe *quod* þe Chanōn soone
þough pore I be crafty' þou schalt/ me fynde
I warne þe ȝit' is þer more behynde
Is þer eny coper here Inne seyde he
ȝe sire *quod* þe prest' I trowe *þer* bee
Elles go bey som and þat as swithe
Now sire go forþ þy way and hy the
And went his way and wiþ þis coper he cam
And þis Chanōn in his hond it nam
And of' þat' coper weyde out' but' an vnce
Al to symple is my tonge to *pronounce*
his moustre and his wit' þe doublenesse
Of' þis Chanoñ roote of' Cursednesse
he semyd freendly to hem þat' knewe him nought'
But' he was feendly bope in werk' and þouȝt'
It' wyrieþ me to telle of' his falsnesse
And naþeles ȝet' wol I it' expresse
To þat' entent þat' men may be war *þer*by
And for non oþer cause trewely
he putte þis vnce of' coper in to þe Crosselette
And of' þe fyur as swiþe he haþ it' sette
And kast' in poudre and made þe prest' to blowe
And in his worching' for to stoupe lowe
As he dide erst and al nas but' a Iape
Right' as him liste þe prest' he made his ape
And afterward in to þe Ingot' he it caste
And in þe panne putte it' atte laste / [leaf 188, back]
Of' water and in he put' his owne hand
And in his sleeue as ȝe byforn hand
herde me telle he hadde a siluer teyne
he slyly took' it' out' þis cursed heyne
vnwetyng' þis prest' of' his false craft'
And in þe pannes botme he haþ it' laft'
And in þe water rombleþ to and fro
And wonder pryuyly tok' it' vp also

þe coper teyne nought knowyng þis prest/
And hidde it and hente him by þe breest
And to him spak and þus sayde in his game
Stowpeþ a doun by god ȝe ben to blame
helpeþ me now as I dide ȝou whiler
Put in ȝoure hand and lokeþ what is þer
þis prest tok vp þis siluer teyne anon
And þanne seyde þe chanon let vs gon
Wiþ þise þre teynes whiche þat we haue wrought
To som goldsmith and wite if it be ought
ffor by my faiþ I nolde for myn hond
But if þei were siluer fyn and good
And þat as swiþe proued schal it be
Vnto þe goldsmith wiþ þise teynes þre
þey wente and putte þise teynes in assay
To fyr and hamer might no man say nay
But þey were as hem ouȝte for to be
þis sottide prest who was gladder þan he
Was neuer bryd gladder aȝeins þe day
Ne nightyngale in þe sesoñ of May
Was neuere non þat liste better to synge
Ne lady lustiere in Carolynge /
And for to speke of loue and wommanhede
Ne knight in armes don an hardy dede
To stonden in grace of his lady deere
þan hadde þis prest þis craft to lere
And to þe chanoñ þus he spak and sayde
ffor þe loue of god þat for vs alle deyde / [leaf 189]
And as I may deserue it vnto ȝow
What schal þis receyt coste telleþ now /
By oure lady *quod* þe chanoñ it is deere
I warne ȝou for saue I and a frere /
In Engelond *þer* can no man it make
No fors *quod* he now sire for goddes sake
What schal I paye tel me I ȝou pray
I-wys *quod* he it/ is ful deere I say

Sire at oo word if þat þe list it haue
3e schulle paye fourty pound so god me saue
And ne were þe frendschipe þat 3e dide er þis
To me 3e scholde paye more y-wys
This prest þe somme of .xl. pound anon
Of nobles fette and took hem eu*e*rychon
To þis chanoñ for þis ilke receyt
Al his worchinge was fraude and deceyt
Sire prest he seyde I kepe for to haue no loos
Of my craft for I wolde it were kept cloos
And as 3e loueþ me kepeþ it secre
ffor and men knewen al my subtilte
By god men wolde haue so gret envye
To me by cause of my philosophie
I scholde be deed þer were non oþer weye
God it forbede *quod* þe preest what seye
3et hadde I leuer spenden al þe good
Which þat I haue and elles waxe I wood
þan þat 3e schulde falle in such mescheef
ffor 3oure good wil sire haue 3e right good preef
Quoþ þe chanoñ and sire wol g*r*aunt m*er*cy
he wente his way and neuer þe prest he sey
After þat day and whan þat þis prest scholde
maken assay at swich tyme as he wolde
Of þis receyt far wel it wolde not be
lo þus byiaped and bygyled was he
þus makeþ he his introduccioñ
To bringe folk to here destruccioñ [leaf 139, back]
Considereþ sires how þat in eche astate
Bitwixe men and gold þer is debate
So ferforþ þat vanneþes þer is non
This multiply3ing blendeþ so many oon
þat in good faiþ I trowe þat it be
þe cause grettest of þis skarsete
This philosophres speken so mystily
In þis craft þat men can not come *per*by

ffor ony witte þat men han now a dayes
þey may wel chitre and Iangle as don þis Iayes 1397
And in here termes sette lust' and peyne
But' to here p*ur*pos schul þey neuer atteyne
A man may lightliche lerne if' he haþ ought
To multiplye and brynge his good to nouȝt' 1401
lo such a lucre is in þis lusty game
A mannes merþe it wol torne all*e* to g*ra*me
And empte also grete and heuye purses
And make folk' to purchacen curses 1405
Of' hem þat han þ*er*to here good y-lent'
O fy for schame þey þat' haue be brent
Allas can þey nat' fle þe fyres hete
ȝe þat' it' vsen I rede ȝe it' lete 1409
lest' ȝe lese al for bet' þan neuer is late
Neuer to þriue were to longe a date
þough ȝe prolle ay ȝe schull*e* it neuer fynde
ȝe ben as bolde as is bayard þe blynde 1413
þat' blundreth forþ and p*er*il casteþ he non
he is as bold to renne a-gayn a stoon
As for to go bysydes in þe weye
So fare ȝe þat' multiplie I seye 1417
If' þat' ȝoure yȝen may not' seen arigħt
lokeþ þat' ȝoure mynd lakke nougħt' his sigħt
ffor þougħ ȝe loke neuer so brode and stare /
ȝe schulle nat' wynne a myte in þat' chaffare 1421
But' wasten al þat' ȝe may Rappe and renne
Wiþdrawe þe fir lest' it' so faste brenne [leaf 190]
Medleþ nomore wiþ þat' art' I mene
ffor if' ȝe doon ȝour þrift' is gon ful clene / 1425
And right' as swithe I wol ȝou telle heere
What' þat' þe philosophres sein in þis matere
lo þus seiþ arnold of' þe newe toun
As his Rosarie makeþ mencioun 1429
he seiþ right' þus wiþouten eny lye
þer may no man mercurie mortifie

But' if' it' be wiþ his broþeres knowleching'
how þat' he which þat first' seyde þis þing'/
Of' Philosophres fader was hermes /
he saiþ how þat' þe dragoñ douteles
Ne dyeþ not' but' if' he be slayn
Wiþ his broþer and þat' is for to sayn
By þe dragoñ mercurie and non oþer
he vnderstood þat' bremston were his broþer
þat' on of' Sol and luna were y-drawe
And þerfore sayde he tak' heed to my sawe
lat' no man busye him þis art' for to seche
But' he þat' þe entencioñ and þe speche
Of' philosophres vnderstonde can
And if' he do he is a lewed man
ffor þis science and þis connyng' *quod* he /
Is of' þe secre of' Secrees parde
Also þer was a disciple of' Plato
That' on a tyme sayde his mayster to
As his book' Somer wil bere witnesse
And þis was his demaunde in sobfastnesse
Telle me þe name of' þe pryuy stoon
And plato answerde vnto him anon
Tak' þe stoon þat' titanos men name
Which is þat' *quod* he magnasia þe same /
Seyde Plato ȝee Sire and is it þus
This is ignotum *per* ignocius
What' is magnasia goode sire I *pray*
It' is a water þat' is maad I say
Of' elementes foure *quod* Plato
Tel me þe roche goode sire *quod* he þo
Of' þat' water if' it' be ȝour wille
Nay nay *quod* Plato certeyn þat' I nylle.
þe Philosophres were sworn echon
þat' þey scholde discouere it to no mon
Ne in no book' it' write in no manere
ffor vnto crist' it' is so leef' and deere

1433 1437 1441 1445 1449 1453 1457 [leaf 190, back] 1461 1465

þat' he wil nat þat' it' discouered be
But' where it' likeþ to his deite
Man to enspire and eek' for to defende
Whom þat' him likeþ lo' þis is þe ende /
Thanne conclude I þus sipens þat' god of heuene
Ne wole nat þat' þe Philosophres neuene
how þat' a man schal come vnto þis stoon
I rede as for þe beste lat' it' goon
ffor who so maketh god his aduersarie
As for to worche eny þing' in contrarie /
vnto his wille certes neuer schal he þriue
þough þat' he multiplie terme of' his lyue
And þere a poynt for ended is my tale
God sende euery trewe man boote of' his bale amen

GROUP C. FRAGMENT IV.

§ 1. THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

CORPUS MS.

¶ The doctour of phisik' [on leaf 190, back.]

THer was as telleþ vs Titus lyueus
A knigħt' þat' cleped was virgineus
ffulfilled of honoures and worþinesse
And strong' of' frendes and of' gret' richesse
A doughter he hadde by his wyf'
And neuere hadde he mo in alle his lyf'
ffair was þis mayde in excellent' beaute
Abouen euery wigħt' þat' man may se
ffor nature haþ with souerein diligence
fformed hire in so gret' excellence
As þough sche wolde say lo I nature
Thus can I forme and peinte a creature
Whan þat' me list' who can me countrefete [leaf 191]
Pigmalion nouȝt' þoughħ he alwey forge and bete
Or graue or peynte for I dar wel sayn
Apollus ȝephirus schulde worche in vayn
To graue or paynte or forge or bete
ȝif' þey presumede me for to countirfete
ffor he þat' is þe formour principal
haþ maad me his viker general
To forme and peynte ech erþely creature
Right' as me lyst' for al þing' is in my cure
vnder þe moone þat' may wane and waxe
And for my werke no þing' wol I axe

My lord and I ben fully at' acord
I made hire to þe worschip of' my lord
So do I alle myn oþre creatures
Of' what' colour þey be or what' figures
Thus semeþ me þat' nature wolde say
This mayde was of' age .xij. ȝeer and tway
In which þat' nature haþ such delyt'
ffor' right' as schie can paynte as lily whit'
And rody as rose right' wiþ such peynture
Sche peynted haþ þis noble creature /
Er sche was born vppon hire lymes fre
Were also bright' as such colours scholde be /
And Phebus dyed haþ his tresses grete
like to þe stremes of' his boornyd hete
And if' þat' excellent' was hire beaute
A þousend fold more vertuous was sche
In hire ne lakkeþ no condicioñ
þat' is to preise as by discrecioñ
As wel in body as gost' chaste was sche
ffor which sche floured in virginite
Wiþ alle humilite and abstinence
Wiþ alle attemperance and pacience
Wiþ mesure eek' and beryng' of' array
Discret' sche was in answering' alway
þough sche were wys as Pallas dar I seyn [leaf 191, back]
hire faucond eek' ful wommanly and pleyn
None counterfeted termes hadde sche
To seme wys but' after hire degre
Sche spak' and alle hire wordes more and lesse
Sownyng' in vertue and in gentillesse
Schamefast' sche was in maydens schamefastnesse
Constant' in herte and euere in busynesse
To dryue hire oute of' hire slogardye
Bachus hadde of' hir mouþ no maystrie
ffor will and þought' doon venus encrece
As men in fyr wol casten oyle or grece /

And of hire owne vertue constreyned
Sche haþ ful ofte tyme hire seek feyned
ffor þat sche wolde flee þe companye /
Wher likly was to treten of folye
As is at festes. Reueles and at Daunces
That ben occasiõs of dalyaunces
Suche þinges maken children for to be
To sone rype and bolde as men may se
Which is ful perilous and haþ ben 3ore
ffor al to sone may sche lerne lore /
Of boldenesse whan sche is a wijf
And 3e maystresses in 3oure olde lyf
þat lordes doughtres han in gouernañce /
Ne takeþ of my word no displesañce
þinges þat ben sette in gouernynges
Of lordes doughtres only for tuo þinges
Ouþer for 3e han kept 3our honeste /
Oþer 3e han falle in frelete
And knowen wel ynough þe olde daunce
And konne forsake fully meschaunce
ffor euermo þer-fore for cristes sake /
kepeþ wel þo þat 3e vndertake
A þeef of venysoñ þat haþ forlaft
his likorousnesse and alle his theues craft
Kan kepe a forest best of ony man [leaf 192]
Now kepeþ hem wel for and 3e wil 3e can
lokeþ wel to no vice þat 3e assente
lest 3e be dampned for 3oure yuel entente
ffor who so doþ a tretour is certayn
And takeþ heed of þat þat I schal sayn
Of alle tresoun suffreyn pestilence
Is whan a wight betrayeþ Innocence
3e fadres and 3e modres eek also
þough 3e haue children be it oon or mo
3oure is þe charge of alle here sufferañce
Whil þey ben vnder 3oure gouernañce

Beþ war þat' by ensample of' 3oure lyuynge
Owþer by necligence in chastysynge
þat' þey ne p*e*rissche I dar wel seye
If' þat' þey don 3e schulle ful sore abeye
vnder a schepperde softe and necligent
þe wolf' haþ many a scheep and lamb torent'
Sufficeth oon ensample now as heere
ffor I moot' torne a3en to my mateere /
This mayde of' which I telle my tale exp*r*esse /
Sche kepte hir self' hir needed no maistresse
ffor in hire lyuyng' maydens mig̃te rede /
As in a book' eu*e*ry good word and dede
þat' longeþ to a mayde v*er*tuous
Sche was so prudent' and so bountyuous
ffor which out' sprong' þe fame on euery syde
Boþe of' hire beaute and of' hire bounte wyde
þat' þurg̃ þe lond þey preised hire echone
That' louede vertu saue envye alone
þat' sory is of' oþer mennes wele
And glad is of' his sorwe and vnhele
The doctour makeþ þis discripcioñ
þis mayde wente on a day in-to þe toun
Toward þe temple wiþ hire mooder deere
As is of' 3onge maydens þe maneere
Now was þer a Iustice in þe toun [leaf 192, back]
That' gou*e*rnour was of' þat' regioñ
And so bifelle þis Iuge his yhen caste
vppon þis mayde hire ful faste
As sche cam forth̃by þer þe Iuge stood
Anon his herte chaungeþ and his mood
So was he caught' wiþ beaute of' þis mayde /
And to himself' ful priuely he sayde /
This mayde schal be my*n* for ony man
Anon þe feend in-to his herte ran
And taught' him sodeynly by what' sleig̃te
þe mayde to his purpos wynne he mig̃te

ffor certes by no force ne by no meede
him þoughţ/ he was not' able for to speede /
ffor he was strong' of' freendes and eek' sche
Confermed was in such souereyn beaute
þat' wel he wiste he mighţ' hire neuer wynne
As for to make hire wiþ hire body synne
ffor which wiþ gret' deliberacioñ
he sente after a clerk' in-to þe touñ
The which he knew for subtil and for bold
This Iuge vnto þis clerk' his tale haþ told
In secre wise and made him to assure /
he scholde telle it' to no creature
And if' he dide he scholde leese his heed
Whan assented was þis cursed reed
Glad was þe Iuge and made glad chere /
And 3af' him 3iftes precious and deere /
Whan schapen was al þis conspiracie
ffrom poynt' to poynt' how þat' his leccherie
Parformed schulde be ful subtilly
as 3e schal here aftirward openly
hom goþ þis clerk' þat' highte Claudius
þis false Iuge þat' highte Apius
So was his name for it is no fable /
But' knowen for an historial þing' notable
The sentence of' it' soþ is out' of' doute [leaf 193]
þis false Iuge goþ now faste aboute
To hasten his delyt' al þat' he may
And so bifelle sone after on a day
þis false Iuge as telleþ vs þe story
As he was woned sat' in his consistory
And 3af' his domes vpon sondry cas
This false clerk' cam forþ a wel good paas
And seyde lord if' þat' it' be 3our wille /
As doþ me right' vpon þis pitous bille
In which I pleyne vppon virginius
And if' þat' he wol seyn it' is not' þus

I wol proue it' and fynde good witnesse
That' soþ is þat' my bille wol expresse
þe Iuge answerde of' þis in his absence
I may not' ȝiue diffinityf' sentence 172
let' don him calle and I wol gladly heere
Thou schalt' haue right and no wrong heere
Virginius cam to wite þe Iuges wille
And right' anon was rad þis cursed bille / 176
The sentence of' it' was as ȝe schul heere
To ȝou my lord sire Apius so deere
Schewe þ ȝoure pouere seruañt Claudius
how þat' a knight' called virginius 180
Aȝens þe lawe aȝeins alle equite
holdeþ expres aȝeins þe will of' me
my seruaunt' which þat is my þral by right
Which from myn hous was stolen on a night 184
Whils sche was ful ȝong' I wol it' preue
By witnesse lord so þat' ȝe ȝou not' greue
Sche is nought' his doughter what' so he say
Wherfore my lord þe Iuge to ȝou I pray 188
ȝelde me my þralle if' þat' it' be ȝour wille
lo þis was al þe sentence of' þe bille
Virgineus gan vpon þe clerk' biholde
But' hastily er he his tale tolde / 192
he wolde haue defended it' as scholde a knight [lent 1(8, back]
And by witnesse of' many a trewe wight
That' al was fals þat seyde his aduersarie
This cursed Iuge wolde no lenger tarie / 196
Ne here a word more of' virgineus
But' ȝaf' his Iuggement and seyde þus
I deme anon þis clerk' his seruaunt haue
þou schalt' no lenger in þin hous hire saue 200
Go bring' hire forth and put' hire in oure warde
þis clerk' schal haue his þral þus I awarde /
And whan þis worþi knight' virgineus /
þurgh þe assent' of' þe Iuge apius 204

Moste by force his deere doughter ȝyuen
vnto þe Iuge in lecchorie to lyuen
he goþ him hom and sette him in his halle
And leet anon his deere douȝter calle /
And with a face deed as ayssches colde
vppon hire humble face he gan biholde
Wiþ fadres pite stiking þorugh his herte
Al wolde he not from his purpos conuerte
Doughter *quod* he virginea by þy name
þer ben tuo weyes oþer deþ or schame
That þou most suffre allas þat I was bore
ffor neuer þou deseruedest wherfore
To deyen with a swerd or wiþ a knyf
O deere doughter endere of my lijf
Which I haue fostred vp wiþ such plesaunce
þat þou ne were out of my remembrance /
O doughter which þat art my laste wo /
And in my lijf my laste ioye also
O gemme of chastite in pacience
Tak þou þi deþ for þis is my sentence /
ffor loue and nat/ for hate þou most be deed
My pitous hond moot smyten of þin heed
Allas þat euer Apius þe say
þus haþ he falsly iugged þe to day
And tolde hire al þe cas as ȝe bifore [leaf 194]
han herd it nedeþ not to telle it more
Mercy deere fader *quod* þis mayde
And wiþ þat word sche boþe hire armes layde
Aboute his necke as sche was woned to dc
þe teeres barsten out of hire eyen tuo
And sayde goode fader schal I dye
Is þer no grace is þer no remedye
No certes deere douȝter myn *quod* he
þanne ȝif me leue fader myn *quod* sche
My deþ to compleigne a litel space
ffor parde Ieffa ȝaf his douȝter grace

ffor to compleyne ar he hir slough allas
And god it wot noþing was hire trespas
But þat sche ran hire fader first to see
To welcome him wiþ gret solempnite
And wiþ þat word sche felle on swown anon
And after whan hir swownyng was agon
Sche riseþ vp and to hire fader sayde /
Blessed be god þat I schal deye a mayde
3if me my deth er þat I haue a schame
Doþ wiþ 3our child 3our wil a goddes name
And wiþ þat word sche prayeþ him ful ofte
þat wiþ his swerd he schulde hir smyte softe
And wiþ þat word on swoune doun sche fel
hir fader wiþ ful sorweful herte and fel
hire heed of smoot and by þe top it hente
And to þe Iuge he 3af it to presente
As he sat in his doom in consistory
Whan þe Iuge it say as saiþ þe story
He bad take him and honge him also faste
But right anon al þe poeple in þraste
To saue þe knight for rouþe and for pite
ffor knowen was þe fooles Iniquite
The poeple anon hadde suspecte in þis þing
By maner of þis clerkes chalangyng
That it was by þassent of Apius [leaf 194, back]
They wisten wel þat he was lecchorous
ffor which vnto þis Apius þey gon
And casten him in prison right anon
Wher as he slough himself and Claudius
þat seruant was vnto þis Apius
Was demed for to honge vpon a tre
But/ virgineus of his grete pite
Prayde for him þat he was exiled
And elles certes he hadde be bygyled
The remenant were honged more & lesse
þat consented were to his cursednesse

Here may men se how synne haþ his meryt /
Be war for noman wot' how god wol smyt'
In no degre ne in which maner wise
The worm of' conscience wol arise
Of' wicked lyf' þough it' so preuy be
þat' noman woot' of' it' but' god and he
Wheþer he be lewed man or lered
he not' how soone þat' he may ben afeered
þer-fore I rede ȝou þis counseil take
fforsakeþ synne er synne ȝou forsake

[*on leaf* 194, *back*]

Owre oost' gan for to swere as he were wood — *Prologus*
harrow q*uo*d he by nayles and by blood — 288
This was a cursed þeef' a fals Iustise
As schamful deþ as herte can deuyse
So falle vpon his body and his bones — [*]
þe deuyl I bekenne him al at ones — [*] 292
Allas to deere boughte sche hire beaute
Wherfore I say þat' alle men may se
That' ȝiftes of' fortune or of' nature
Beþ cause of' deþ of' many a creature — 296
hire beaute was hire deþ I dar wel sayn
Allas so pitously as sche was slayn
But' her of' wil I not' p*ro*cede as now — [*spurious*]
Men haue ful often more harm þan prow — 300
But' trewely myn owne mayst*er* deere — [leaf 195]
This is a pitous tale for to heere
But' naþeles passe ouer is no fors
I pray to god so saue þin gentil cors — 304
And þin vrynals and þin Iurdanes
Thyn ypocras and þin Galianes
And eu*er*y box ful of' þin letuarie
God blesse hem and oure lady seinte marie — 308
So mote I þe þou art' a p*ro*pre man
And ylike a prelat' by seint Runyan
Sayde I nouȝt' wel can I nouȝt' speke in terme
But' wel I woot' þou dost' myn herte to erme — 312
That' I almost' haue caught a Cardyacle /
By Corpus bones but' if' I haue triacle
Oþer elles a draught' of' moyste and corny ale /
Or but' I heere anoon a merye tale / — 316

Myn herte is lost' for pite of' þis mayde
þou belamy Iohn P*ar*doner he sayde
[*Part of the MS is cut away here*]
es right anon
eint Runyon
re at' þis ale stake
nke and eten of' a Cake
þise gentils bygonne to crye
lle vs of' no rybaudye
ortal þing' þat' we may leere
þenne wol we gladly heere
wys q*uod* he but I moot þynke
honest' þing' whil þat' I drinke

[1]bygynneþ þe *Par*doneres tale folwynge

C[m] xvj[m]

LOrdynges q*uod* he in chirches whan I preche
I peyne me to haue an hauteyn speche
I ryng[e] it[e] out[e] as round as goþ a belle
ffor I can al by rote þat[e] I telle
My teeme is alway oon and euer was
[1]malor*um* est[e] Cupiditas
[1]whennes þat[e] I come
A þenne my bulles schewe I alle and some
Oure liege lordes seal is my patent
þat[e] schewe I first[e] my body to warant
That[e] no man be so bolde ne prest[e] ne clerk[e]
me to destourbe of[e] cristes holy werk[e]
And after þat[e] telle I forþ my tales
Bulles of[e] Popes and of[e] Cardinales
Of[e] Patriarkes and bisschoppes I schewe
And in latyn I speke wordes a fewe
To saffran wiþ my p*re*dicacioñ
And for to stere men to deuoicoñ
þanne schewe I forþ my lange cristal stones
I-crammed ful of[e] cloutes and of[e] bones
Relikes þey ben as wenen þey echone
þan haue I in latoun a schulder bone
Which þat[e] was of[e] an holy iewes scheep
Goode men say I takeþ of[e] my wordes keep
If[e] þat[e] þis bon be waisshe in any welle
If[e] kow or calf[e] scheep or oxe swelle
That[e] eny worme haþ y-bite or stronge
Touche he þis boon anon he schal be sounde

[1] *Part of the MS is cut away here.*

[leaf 195, back]

And ȝit' also I seye forþermore
Of' pokkes of' scabbes and of' euery sore
Schal euery scheep be hool þat' of' þis welle
Drinkeþ a draught' and take keep what I telle
Wole euery wight' er þat' þe cok' him croweþ
And do þing' þat' him oweþ
ffastynge drinke of' þis welle a draught
As þilke holy iewe oure eldre ous taught
his bestes and his store schal multiplye
And sires also it' heleþ Ielousie
And þey a man be falle in gelouse rage
Let' make wiþ þis water his potage
And neuer schal he more his wijf' mystreste
þey he in soþe a defaute by hire wiste
Al had sche taken prestes tuo or þre
heer is a myteyn eek' as ȝe may see [leaf 196]
he þat' his hond wel putte in þat' myteyne
he schal haue multiplyyng' of' his greyne
When he haþ sowen be it whete or ootes
So þat' of' pens oþer elles of' grootes
And men and wommen o þing' warne I ȝou
If' any wight' be in þis chirche now
That' haþ don synne orrible þat' he
Dar nought' for schame schriuen be
Or eny womman be sche ȝong' or old
þat' haþ y-maad hire housbonde kokewold
Such folk' schuln haue no power ne grace
To offre to my relikes in þis place
And who so fyndeþ him out of' such blame
þey wole come vp and offre in goddes name
And I assoile him by þe auctorite
Which þat' by bulle was y-graunted me
By þis gande haue I wonne euery ȝere
An hundred mark' seþenes I was pardonere
I stande lik' a clerk' in many a pulpette
And schewe lewed poeple and doun þey sette

I preche so as ȝe haue herd byfore
And telle an hundred Iapes more /
þenne peyne I me to strecche forþ my nekke
And Estꝰ and westꝰ vpon þe poeple I bekke
As doþ a dowfe sittyngꝰ vpan a berne
myn handes and my tonge gon so ȝerne
þatꝰ is itꝰ ioye to se my busynes
Ofꝰ auarice and such oþer cursednes
Is al my prechinge to make hem fre
To ȝiue here pans and namely vnto me
ffor myn ententꝰ is nouȝtꝰ butꝰ for to wynne
And noþingꝰ for correccioñ ofꝰ synne
I rekke neuer whan þatꝰ þey ben beried
þoughñ þatꝰ here soules gon a blake beryed
ffor certes many a predicacioñ
Sowneþ ofte tyme ofꝰ yuel intencioñ [leaf 196, back]
Somme for plesaunce ofꝰ folkꝰ and for flaterie
To ben auaunced by ypocresye
And somme for veynglorie and somme for hate /
ffor whan I dar nouȝtꝰ oþerwise debate
þanne wil I stynge hem with my tonge smerte
In preachingꝰ so þatꝰ þei schal nouȝtꝰ astẽrte
To be diffamed falsly ifꝰ þat he
haþ trespassed to my breþeren oþer to me
ffor þough I telle nouȝtꝰ his propre name
Men schal welknowe þatꝰ itꝰ is þe same
By symony and by oþer circumstaunces
þus quyte I folkꝰ þatꝰ doþ vs displesaunces
þus spitte I out my venym vnder hewe
Ofꝰ holynesse to seme holy andtrewe
Butꝰ schortly myn entent I wil deuyse
I preche ofꝰ no þingꝰ butꝰ ofꝰ coueytise
þerfore my teeme is ȝitꝰ and euer was
Radix malorum estꝰ cupiditas /
Thus gan I preche aȝeins þe same vice
Such þatꝰ I vse and þatꝰ is auarice

That' þough I my self' be gulty in þat' synne
3it' kan I make oþer folk' for to wynne
ffrom auarice and sore to repente
But' þat' nys nought my principal entente
I preche no þing' but' for coueityse
Of' þis matiere I ought' ynough suffise
þenne telle I of' ensamples many on
Of' olde stories longe tyme agon
ffor lewed poeple louen tales olde
Whiche þinges can þey wel reporte and holde
What trowe 3e whiles þat' I may preche
And wynne gold and siluer for I teche
That' I wol lyue in pouert' wilfully
Nay nay I þought' it' neuer trewely
ffor I wol preche and begge in sondry landes
ffor I wole do no labour wiþ myn handes [leaf 197]
And make basketes and lyue þerby
By cause I wol not' beggen ydelly
I wole none of' þe aposteles countrefete
I wole haue money chese and whete
Al were it' 3euen of' þe porest' page
Oþer of' þe porest' wydewe in a village
Al scholde here children sterue for famyne
Nay I wol drynke þe likour of' þe vyne
And haue a Ioly wenche in euery toun
But' herkneþ lordynges in conclusioñ
3oure liking' is þat' I schal telle a tale
Now I haue drunke a draught' of' corny ale
By god I hope I schal telle 3ou a þing'
þat' schal by resoun ben at' 3our liking'
ffor þough my selue be a vicious man
A more-ille tale 3it' I 3ou telle can
Which I am wont' to preche for to wynne
Now holde 3oure pees my tale I wol begynne

IN fflaundres whilom was a companye /
Of ỽong' folk' þat' haunteden folye
As Ryot' hasard stewes and tauernes
[1]Where as whyþ harpes lutes and gyternes[1] [1—1 *In a different hand.*]
They daunce and pleye at dyse boþe day and nigħt'
And eeten also and drunken ouer al here migħt'
þorugħ which þey doon þe deueles sacrifise
Wiþinne þe deueles temple in cursed wyse
þe Super*flues* abhominable
here oþes ben so grete and dampna[b]le /
þat' it' is grisly for to here hem swere
Oure blessed lordes body they to-tere
hem þoughte Iewes rent/ him nought ynough
And ilke of' hem at' oþer synnes lowħ
And right' anon þenne come tomblisteres
ffetys and smal ỽong' fruytesteres /
Syngers with harpes bawdes wafereres
Suche ben verray þe deueles officers [leaf 197, back]
To kyndle and blowe þe fyr of' leccherie /
That' is annexed to glotonye /
The holy writ' take I to witnesse / ¶ Nolite inebriari vino in
That' leccherie is in wyn and drunkenesse ¶ quò *est* luxuria
Lo how þat' drunken loth vnkyndely
lay by his doughtres tuo vnwetyngly
So drunke he was he nyste what' he wrought'
And þerfore sore repente him oughte [*spurious*]
heroudes who so wole þe stories seche
þer may ỽe lerne and by ensample teche [*spurious*]

Whan he of' wyn was replet' at' his feste
Right' at' his owen table ȝaf' his heste
To slen þe Baptist' Iohan ful gulteles
Senek' saiþ eek' goode wordes douteles
he seiþ he can no difference fynde
Bitwix a man þat/ is out of' his mynde
And a man þat' is drunkelewe
But' þat' wodnesse is fallen in a schrewe
Perseuereþ lenger þan doþ drunkenes
O glotenye ful of' cursednes
O cause ferst' of' oure confusiō
O original of' oure dampnaciō
Til crist' hadde brought' out' wiþ his blood agayn
lo how deere and schortly was to sayn
Aboute was þe cursed vilanye /
Corrupte was al þis world þurgh glotenye
Adam oure fader and his wyf' also
ffro paradys to labour and to wo
Were dryuen for þat' vice it' nys no drede
ffor whiles þat' adam fasted as I rede
He was in paradys and whan þat' he /
Ete of' þe fruyte defended on a tre
Anon he was out' cast' to woo and pleyne
O glotonye on þe wel oughte ous pleigne
O wiste a man how many maladyes
ffolweþ of' excesse and of' glotenyes [leaf 198]
he schulde be þe more mesurable
Of' his diete sittyng' at' þe table
Allas þe schorte þrote þe tendre mouþ
Makeþ þat' Est' and West' north and souþ
In erþe in aier in water men to swynke /
To gete a glotoun mete and drynke
Of' þis matiere o poule wel canst' þou entrete
Mete vnto wombe and wombe eek' vnto mete
Schal god discryuen boþe as poule saiþ
Allas a foul þing' is it' by my faiþ /

¶ Ieronimus *contra* Iouinianum quamdiu ieiunauit in paradiso fuit commedit et eiectus est statim duxit vxorem

To say þis word and fouler is þe dede ¶ Esca ve tibi & venter escis deus [P] aurtem & hunc in illam destre.
When men so drynkeþ of' þe white and þe rede /
þat' of his þrote he makeþ his pryue
þurgh̄ þilke cursed super*fluite*
The apostel wepyng' saiþ ful pitously
Ther walken many of' which ȝou told haue I
I say it now wepyng' wiþ pitous voys
Ther ben enemys of' cristes croys
Of' which þe ende is deþ þe wombe is here god
O wombe o holy o stynkynge kod
ffulfilde of' dunge and of' corupcioñ
At' eyþer ende of' þe foule is þe soun
How gret' cost' and labour is to fynde
þise cookes how þey scampe and streyne and grynde /
And turnen substaunce in-to accident
To fulfille al þy likerous talent'
Out' of' þe harde bones knokken þay
þe mary for þay caste nough̄t' away
þat' may go þurgh̄ þe golet' softe and swoote
Of' spicerie of' leues bark' and roote
Schal ben his sause y-maad by delyte
To make him ȝit' a newer appetite
But' certes he þat' haunteþ suche delices
Is deed whiles þat' he lyueþ in þe vices
A leccherous þing' is wyn and drunkenes /
Is ful of' stryuyng' and of' wrecchednes [leaf 198, back]
O drunken man disfigured is þi face
ffoul is þi breþ foul art' þou to embrace
And þurgh̄ þin drunken nose semeþ þi soun
As þough̄ þou seydest' ay Sampsoñ Sampsoñ
And ȝit' god woot' Sampsoñ dronk' neuer no wyn
Thow fallest' as it' were a stiked swyn
Thyn tunge is lost' and alle þin honeste cures
ffor drunkenes is *ver*ray sepultures
Of' mannes wit' and his discrecioñ
In whom þat' drynke haþ dominacioñ

He can no counseil kepe it' is no drede
Now kepe 3ou fro þe white and fro þe rede
Namly fro þe white wyn of' lepe
þat' is to selle in ffischstret' or in Chepe /
This wyn of' Spayne crepeþ subtilly
In oþer wynes growyng' faste by
Of' which þer ryseþ such fumosite
þat' whan a man haþ drunken draughtes þre /
And weneþ þat' he be at' home in chepe
he is in spayne right' at' þe toune of' lepe
Nought' at' þe Rochel ne at' Burdeux toun
And þenne wolen þey sayn Sampsoun Sampsoun
But' herkneþ lordinges o word I 3ou prey
That' all þe souerein actes dar I say
Of' victories in þe olde testament'
þat' þurgh verray god þat' is omnipotent'
Were don in abstinence and in prayere
lokeþ þe bible and þere 3e may it leere
lokeþ attyla þe grete conquerour
Deyed in his sleepe wiþ schame and dishonour
Bledyng' ay at' his nose in drunkenes
A Capitayne schulde lyue in sobernes /
And ouer al þis avise 3ou right' wel
What' was comaunded vnto lamuel
Nought' Samuel but lamuel say I /
Redeþ þe bible and fyndeþ it' expressely [leaf 199]
Of' wyn 3euynge to hem þat' han iustice
Nomore of' þis for it' may wel suffice

ANd now þat' I haue spoke of' glotonye
Now wole I defende 3ou hasardye
hasard is verray mooder of' lesynges
And of' disceipt' cursed forswerynges
Blaspheme of' crist' and mansleynges also
Of' batayle of' tyme and of' oþer mo
It' is repreff' and contrarie to honour
ffor to be holde a comune hasardour

And euer þe hyer he is of' astate
þe more he is y-halden desolate
If' þat' a prince vse hasardrye
In alle gouernaunce and alle polesye
he is as by comun opynyoñ
y-halde þe lasse in reputacioñ
[Stilbon that' was holde. a wise ambassato*ur*
Was sent' in-to Corynthy. with̄ ful grete hono*ur*] [Reg. 17 D xv, *leaf* 222]
ffro Calydonye to maken him alleaunce
And whan he cam him happede þis chaunce
þat' alle þe grettest' þat' were of' þis lande
Pleying' at' þe hasard he hem fande
ffor which as sone as þat' mighte be
he stal him home aʒein to his cuntre
And sayde þer I wol nought̄ lese my name
I ne wol nought̄ take on me so gret' diffame
ʒou to alleye to none hasardoures
Sendeþ oþerwise embassetoures
ffor by my trouþe me were leuer deye /
þan̄ I to ʒou schulde hasardoures alleye /
ffor ʒe þat' ben so glorious in honoures
Schal nouʒt' aleye ʒou wiþ hasardoures
As by my wille ne as by my trete
þis wise Philosophre sayde to me
loke þou vse no pley of' dees in þin hous
loke eek' þat' to þe king' Demetrus
Sente him a payre of' dees of' gold in scorn
ffor he hadde vsed hasardye *þer* byforn• [leaf 199, back]
ffor which he helde his glorie and his reno*ur*n
At' no value of' reputacio*ur*n
lordes mighten fynden o*þer* maner pley
honeste ynough̄ to dryue þe day awey

NOw wol I speke of' oþes false and grete
A word or tuo as oþer bookes entrete
Gret' sweryng' is a þing' abhominable
And fals swerynge is more reprouable

þe hihe god forbad sweryng' at' al
Witnesse at' Matthew but' in special
Of' sweryng' saiþ þe holy Ieromie
þou schalt' swere soþ þin oþes and nought' lye /
And swere in doome and eek' in rightwisnesse
But' ydel sweryng' is a cursednesse
Bihold and see þat' in þe ferste table /
Of' heyhe goddes hestes honurable /
how þat' þe secounde heste of' him is þis /
Take nought' my name in ydelnesse amys /
lo raþer he forbedeþ such sweryng'
Or Omycyde or eny oþer cursed þing'
I say as by ordre þus it' standeþ
This knoweþ þat' his hestes vnderstandeþ
how þat' þe secounde heste of' god is þat'
And forþermore I wol þe telle al plat'
þat' vengeaunte schal nou3t' parte fro his hous
þat' of' his othis is so outrageous
By goddes precious herte and his nayles
And by his blood þat' is in hayles
Seuen is my chaunce and þin is fyue and þre /
By goddes armes if' þou falsly pleye me
þis dagger schal þurgh þin herte go
þis fruyt' comeþ of' þe bicched bones tuo
fforsweryng' Ire falsnes homicyde
Now for þe loue of' crist' þat' for vs dyde
leueþ 3oure oþes boþe grete and smale
ffor cristes sake and herkne to my tale [leaf 200]
þise ryetoures þre of' which I telle
longe er pryme ronge eny belle
Were sette hem in a tauerne for to drynke /
And as þey sate þey herde a belle clynke /
Byforn a corps was caryed to his graue
þat' oon of' hem gan calle to his knaue /
Go bet' quoþ he and axe redyly
What' corps is þis þat' paseþ faste by /

And loke þat' þou reporte his name wel
Sire q*uod* þis boye it' nedeþ neuer a del
It' was me told er ȝe came here to oures
He was p*ar*de an old felawe of' ȝoures
Al sodeynly was he slayn to nigħt /
ffor-drunke as he sate vp his benche vprigħt'
Ther came a pryue þeef' men cleped deþ
þat' in his cuntre al þe poeple sleþ
And with his spere he smot' his herte a tuo
And went' his way wiþouten wordes mo
And maister er ȝe come in his p*re*sence /
he haþ a þousend slain þis pestilence /
Me þinkeþ it' were necessarie /
ffor to be war of' such an aduersarie /
Beþ redy for to mete him euermore /
þus taughte me my dame I say no more /
By seinte mary seyde þis tauernere
þe child saiþ soþ for he haþ slayn to ȝere
Hens ouer a myle wiþinne a gret' village
Boþe man and wo*m*man child and page
I trowe his habitacioñ be þere /
To ben auysed gret' wisedom it were /
Er þat' he dede a man dishonour
ȝe goddes armes q*uod* þis ryetour
Is it/ such p*er*il wiþ him for to mete
I schal him seeke by wey and eek' by strete
I make avow to goddes digne bones
Herkne felawes we þre ben alle ones [leaf 200, back]
let' eche of' vs halde vp his hand to oþ*er*
And eche of' vs bycome oþeres broþ*er*
And we woln slee þis false traytour deþ
He schal be slayn he þat' so many sleþ
By goddes dignite er it' be nigħt'
To-gidre haue þese þre here hertes higħt
To lyue and deye ilk' of' hem to oþer
As þoughi he were his owen sworne broþ*er*

And vp þey sterte al drunken in þis rage
And forþ þey gon toward þat' village
Of' which þe tauerner haþ spoke byforn
And many a grisly oþ þenne haue þey sworn
And cristes blessed body þey torent
Deth schal be deed if' þat' we may him hent/
Whan þey han goon nought fully a myle /
Right' as þey wolde haue treden ouer a style
And olde and a pore man with hem mette
þis olde man ful mekely hem grette
And seyde þus now lordes god 3ou se
þe proudest' of' þese ryettoures þre
Answered agayn what' carle wiþ harde grace
Why art' þou al forwrapped saue þy face /
Why lyuest' þou so longe in so gret' age /
þis olde man gan loke in his visage /
And sayde þus for I can nought' fynde /
A man þough þat' I walked in-to ynde /
Neyþer in Cite ne in village
That' wol chaunge his 3ouþe for myn age
And þerfore moot' I haue myn age stille
As lange tyme as it' is goddes wille /
Ne deþ allas nel nought' haue my lyf'
þus walke I lyk' a resteles kaytyf'
And on þe ground which is my moodres gate /
I knokke wiþ my staff' erly and late
And saye leeue mooder lete me Inne
Lo how I wanse fleissch and blood and skyn [leaf 201]
Allas whan schullen myne bones ben at' reste
Moder with 3ou wolde I chaunge my cheste
That' in my chambre lange tyme haue be
3e for an here clout/ to wrappe me
But' 3it' to me sche wole nou3t' do þat/ grace
ffor which ful hale and welked is my face
But' sires to 3ou it nys no curtesye
To speken vntil an olde man vilenye

But' he trespace in word oþer elles. in dede
In holy wryt' 3e may 3oure self' wel rede /
A3eins an olde man hoor vpon his heede /
3e schullen aryse wherfore I 3iue 3ow rede
Ne doþ nou3t' to an olde man non harme now
No more þat' men dede to 3ow
In age if' þat' 3e so longe abyde
And god be wiþ 3ou wheþer 3e go or ryde
I mot' go þider þer as I haue to go
Nay olde cherl by god þou schalt' nou3t' so
Sayde þis olde hasardour anon
þou þartest' nought' so lightly by seint' Ion
þou spake right' now of' þilke traitour deþ
þat' in þis cuntre alle oure frendes sleeþ
haue heer my trouþe as þou art' his aspye /
Telle wher he is or þou schalt' abye
By god and by þe holy sacrament/
ffor soþly þou art' on of' his assent'
To slen vs 3onge folk' þou false þeef'
Now sires if' þat' it be to 3ou so leef'
To fynde deþ turne vp þis croked wey
ffor in þat' groue I lafte him by my fey
vnder a tre and þere he wole abyde
Ne for 3oure bost' he nyl him no þing' hyde
Se 3e þat' Oke right' þere 3e schuln him fynde
God saue 3ou þat' bou3t' a3ein mankynde.
And 3ou amende þus sayde þis olde man
And euery of' þise ryetoures ran [leaf 201, back]
Til þey came to þe tree and þer þey founde
Of' floryns fyne of' gold y-coyned rounde
Wel neih a seuen buscheles as hem þought'
No lenger þenne after deþ þey sought'
But' eche of' hem so glad was of' þe sight'
ffor þat' þe floryns so faire ben and bright'
That' doun þey sette hem by þe *precious* horde
The worste of' hem he spak/ þe firste worde

Breperen quod he take keepe what I say
My witte is gret pough pat I bourde and play
pis tresour hap fortune to vs 3iuen
In merpe and Iolyte oure lijf to lyuen
And lightly as it comep so wole we spende
Ey goddes precious dignite who wende
To day pat we schulde haue so fair a grace
But mighte pis golde be caryed fro pis place
home to myn hous oper elles vnto 3oures
panne mighte we seye pat it/ were al oures /
penne were we in heih felicite
but trewely by day it may noght be /
Men wolde say pat we were peues stronge
And for oure oughne tresour don vs honge
pis tresour moste y-karied be by night
As wysly and as sleighly as hit might
Wherfore I rede let loke among vs alle
Be drawe and let see wher pe cutte wol falle
he pat hap pe cutte wip herte blythe
Schal renne to toune and pat ful swythe
To brynge vs breed and wyn ful pryuyly
And tuo of ous schuln kepe ful subtilly
pis tresour wel and if he wol nought tarien
Whan pat it is night we woln py tresour carien
By on assent wher as vs luste best
pat oon of hem broughte in his feste
And bad hem drawe and loke on whom it wol falle
And it fille on pe 3ongeste of hem alle [leaf 202]
And forp toward pe toun he wente anon
And also soone as he was y-gon
pat on of hem spak pus vnto pat oper
pou wost wel pat pou art myn owen sworne broper
Thyn prophyte wol I telle pe anon
pou wost wel pat oure felawe is gon
And heere is gold and pat ful gret plente
That it schal departed be among vs pre

But' naþeles if' I can schape it/ so
þat' it' departed were among' vs tuo
had I nought' don a frendes turne to þe
þat' oþer answerde I not' how þat mighte be
I woot' wel þat' þe gold is oure tuo
What' schulde we seye what' schulde we do
Schal it' be counseil sayde þe firste schrewe /
And I schal telle in wordes fewe
What' we schuln doon and bringe it' wel aboute
I graunte *quod* þat' oþer out of' doute
þat' by my trewþe I wol þe nouȝt' bewreye
Now quoþ þe firste þou wost' wel we be tweye
And tweyne of' vs schuln strenger ben þan oon
loke whenne he is sette and þanne anon
Aryse as þou woldest' wiþ him pleye
And I schal renne him þurgh þe sydes tweye
Whiles þat' þou struggelist' wiþ him in game
And wiþ þy dagger loke þou do þe same
And þenne schal al þis gold departed be
My deere freend bitwixe þe and me
þenne may we boþe oure lustes fulfille
And pleye atte dys right' at' oure owen wille
And þus accorded ben þese schrewes tweye
To sleen þe þridde as ȝe herde me seye
þis ȝongest' which þat' wente to þe toun
fful ofte in herte he rolleþ vp and doun
þe beaute of' þese floreynes newe and bright'
O lord quoþ he if' so were þat' I might' [leaf 202, back]
Al þis tresour wynne to my self' allone
þer nys no man þat' lyueþ vnder þe trone /
Of' god þat' scholde lyue as mery as I
And at' þe laste þe feend oure enemy
Putte in his þouȝt' þat' he schulde poyson beye
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye
ffor why þe feend fand him in such lyuyng'
That' hadde leue him to sorwe brynge

ffor þis was vtterly his entent
To slen hem boþe and neuer to repent
And forþ he goþ no lenger nolde he tarye
In-to þe toun vnto a potyearie /
And preyde him þat he him wolde selle
Som poysoun þat he might his rattes quelle
And eek þer was a polkat in his hawe
þat as he sayde his Capons had y-slawe /
And sayde he wolde wreken him if he might
Of vermyn þat distroyed him by night
þe apotykaries answerde þou schalt haue
A þing þat als god my soule saue
In al þis world þer nys no creature
þat eten or drunken haþ of þis confecture
Nought but þe mountaunce of a corn of whete
þat he ne schal his lyf anon forlete
ȝe sterue he schal and þat in lasse while /
þenne þou wolt gon a pace nought but a myle
þis poysoun is so strong and so vyolent
þis cursed man haþ in his hand y-hent
þis þoysoun in a box and sepenes he ran
In-to þe nexte strete vnto a man
And borwed him large botelles þre
And in þe tweyne þis poysoñ poured he
þe þridde he keped clene for his drynke
ffor al þe night he schop him to swynke
In karying of þe golde out of þat place
And whan þis ryetour wiþ sory grace [leaf 203]
had felled wiþ him his grete botelles þre
To his felawes ayayn repayreþ he
What nedeþ it to sermone þer-of more
ffor right as þay hadde cast his deþ afore
Right so þey haue him slayn and þat anon
And whenne þat þis was don þen spak þat oon
Now let vs drynke and sytte and make vs mery
And afterward we wolen his body bery

And aftirward it' happed hem per cas
To take þe botel þer-in þe poysoñ was
And drank' and 3af' his felawe drynke also
ffor which anon þey storuen boþe tuo
But' certes I suppose þat' Auycenne
Wrot' neuer in no Canoun ne in no fenne
Mo wonder sorwes of' enpoysonyng'
Thus hadde þise wrecches tuo here endynge
Thus ended ben þis Omycides tuo
And eek' þe false enpoysonere also
O cursed synne ful of' cursednes
O traytours Omycyderes o wikkednes
O glotenye o luxurie O hasardye
þou blasphemer of' crist' wiþ vilenye
And oþes grete of' vsage and of' pryde
Allas mankynde how may it betyde
þerto þin creatour / which þat' þe wrought'
And wiþ his precious blood þe bought'
þou art' so fals and so vnkynde allas
Now goode men god for3iue 3oure trespas
And ware 3ou fro þe synne of' auarice /
Myn holy pardoun may 3ou alle warische
So þat' 3e offre nobles or sterlinges
Oþer elles seluer spones broches and rynges /
Boweþ 3oure hed vnder þis holy bulles
Comeþ vp 3e wyues offreþ 3oure wulles
3oure name I entre here in my rolle anon
In-to þe blisse of' heuen schul 3e goñ [leaf 203, back]
I 3ou assoille by myn heih powere
3e þat' woln offre as clene and eek' as cleere
As 3e were born and sires lo þus I preche
And Ihesu crist' þat' is oure soules leche
So graunte 3ou his pardoun to resceyue
ffor þat' is best' I wol 3ou nou3t disceyue
But' sires o word forgat' I in my tale
I haue reliqes and pardoñ in my male

As faire as eny man in Engelond
Whiche were me y-3oue by þe popes hond
If eny of 3ou wole of deuocioñ
Offren and haue myn absolucioñ
Comeþ forþ anon and kneleþ doun heere
And 3e schuln haue my pardoñ þat is deere
Oþer elles takeþ pardoun as 3e wende
Al newe and freissche at euery tounes ende
So þat 3e offren alway newe and newe /
Nobles and pens which þat ben good and trewe
It is an honour to euerich þat is heere
þat 3e may haue a suffisaunt pardonere
To assoille 3ou in cuntre as I ryde
ffor auentures which þat may betyde
ffor peraduenture þer may falle on or tuo
Doun of his hors and breke his necke a tuo
loke which a suerte it is to 3ou alle
þat I am in 3our felaschipe y-falle
þat may assoille 3ou boþe more and lasse
Whan þat þe soule schal fro þe body passe /
I rede þat oure hooste schal begynne
ffor he is most envoluped in synne
Comeþ forþ sire Ost and offreþ first anon
And þou schalt kisse þe relikes euerychoon
3e for a grote vnbokel anon þy purs
Nay nay quod he þenne haue I cristes curs
Let be quod he it / schal nou3t be so þeche
þou woldest make me kesse þin olde breche [leaf 204] 948
And swere it were a relyk of a seint
þough it were wiþ þyn foundement depeynt
But by þe Crosse which þat seint Eleyne fand
I wolde I hadde þine coyllons in myn hand
In stede of relikes oþer of seintuary
let cutte hem of I wol þe helpe hem cary
þey schuln be schryned in an hogges tord
þis pardoner answerde nou3t a word

So wroþ he was he nolde no word say
Now q*uod* oure Oost' I wil no lenger play
Wiþ þe ne with non o*þer* angry man
But' right' anon þe worþy knigh̄t' bygan
Whan þat' he saugh̄ þat' al þe poeple l[ough]
Nomore of' þis for it is right' ynough̄
Sire p*ar*doner be mery and glad of' cheere
And ȝe sire Oste þat' ben to me so deere
I pray ȝou þat' ȝe kisse þe p*ar*doneere
And p*ar*doner I p*ra*y þe þat' þou drawe þe neere
And as we dide let' vs laughe and pleye
Anon þey kisse and ryden forþ here weye ¶ Explicit'. f*abula* P*ar*don*arii*

GROUP B. (β. FRAGMENT III.)

§ 4. THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

¶ Here bygynneþ þe schipmannes tale [on leaf 204]

A Marchaunt' whilom dwelled at' Seint' Denys Ca^m
That' riche was for which men heelde him wys xvij^m.
A wyf' he hadde of' excellent' beaute
And compynable and reuerent' was sche
Which is a þing' þat' causeþ more dispence
þen worþ is alle þe cheere and reuerence
That' men haue doon at' festes and at' daunces
Suche salutaciouns and contynañces
Passeþ as doþ þe schadewe on a wal
But woo is him þat' paye moot' for al
þe sely housband algates he moste paye
he moot' vs cloþe and vs arraye
As for his owen worschipe richely
In which aray we daunce Iolyly
And if' þat' he nou3t' may *per* aduenture [leaf 204, back]
Or elles luste no suche spenses endure /
But' þenkeþ it' is waste and y-loste /
Thenne moot' anoþ*er* payen for oure coste
Or lene us golde and þat' is *per*ilous
þis noble marchand held a noble hous
ffor which he hadde alday gret' repayre
ffor his largenesse and for his wyf' was fayre
þat' wonder is but' herkeneþ to my tale
Amonges aH his gestes grete and smale /
þer was a monk' a fair man and a bolde
I trowe a þritty wynter he was olde /
That' euer in oon was drawyng' to þe place
þis 3onge monk' þat' was so fair of' face

Aqueynted was so wiþ þis goode man
Siþenes þat' here firste knowleche bygan
That' in his hous as ffamuler was he
As it is possible eny frend to be
And for as mekel as þe goode man
And eek' þis monk' of' which þat' I bygan
Were boþe tuo y-born in o village
The monk' him claymeþ as for cosynage
And he aȝein he saiþ nought' ones nay
But' was as glad þer of' as foul of' day
ffor to his herte it was a gret' plesaunce
þus ben þay knitte wiþ eterne alliaunce /
And ilke of' hem gan oþer for to assure /
Of' broþerhode whiles þat' here lyf' may dure
ffre was daun Iohñ and namely of' dispense
As in þat' hous and ful of' diligence
To do plesaunce and also gret' costage /
he nought' forgat' ȝo ȝiue þe leste page /
In al þat' hous but' after here degre
He ȝaf' þe lord and seþins al his meyne /
Whan þat' he came som maner honest' þing'
ffor which þey were al glad of' his comyng'
As foul is fayn whan sonne vp ariseþ [leaf 205]
Namore of' þis as now for it' suffiseþ
But' so bifeH þis marchaund vpon a day
Schop him to make redy his array
Toward þe toun of' Bruges for to fare
To byen þere a porcioun of' ware
ffor which he haþ to Parys sent' anon
A messanger and preyed haþ doun Ion
That' he schulde come to seint' Denys and pleye
Wiþ him and with his wyf' a day or tweye
Or he to Bruges wente in alH wyse
This noble monk' of' which I ȝou deuyse
haþ of' his abbot' as him lust' licence
By cause he was a man of' heih prudence

And eek' an officer out' for to ryde
To see here graunges and here bernes wyde
And vnto seynt' Denys he comeþ anon
Who was so welcome as my lord daun Iohñ
Oure deere cosyn ful of' curtesye
Wiþ him brought' he a Iobbe of' maluesye
And eek' anoþer ful of' good vernage
And volatille as ay was his vsage
And þus I lete hem ete and drynke and pleye
This marchand and þis monk' a day or tweye /
The þridde day þis marchand vp ariseþ
And on his needes sadly him aviseþ
And vp in to his countourhous goþ he /
To rekne wiþ himselue wel may be
Of' þilke 3eer how þat' it' with him stood
And how þat' he despended hadde his good
And if' þat' he encresed were or non
his bokes and his bagges many oon
he leyþ bifore him on his countyng' bord
ful riche was his tresour and his hoord
for which ful faste his counterhous dore he schette
And eek' he nolde noman schulde him lette
Of' his acountes for þe mene tyme [leaf 205, back]
And þus he sitte til it' was passed prime
Daun Iohn was rysen in þe morne also /
And in þe gardyn walkeþ to and fro
And haþ his þinges sayde deuoutely
þis goode wyf' cam walkynge pryuely
In to þe gardyn per he walkeþ softe
And him salueth as sche haþ don ofte
A mayden childe came in hire companye
Which at hire luste may gouerne and gye
for 3it vnder þe 3erde was þe mayde
O deere Cosyn myn daun Iohn sche sayde /
What' eyleþ 3ou so raþe to aryse
Nece quod he it' aughte ynough suffise

ffyue houres for to slepen on a nyght
But' it' were for an olde palled knight
As ben þese wedded men þat' lye and dare
As in a forme sitte alway an hare
Were al forstraught' wiþ houndes grete and smale
But' deere neece why be 3e so pale /
I trowe certes þat' oure goode man
haþ 3ou laboured sepenes þe night' bygan
þat' 3ou were neede to resten hastily
And wiþ þat' word he lough ful meryly
And of' his owne þought he wax al reed
This fayre wyf' gan to schake hire heed
And sayde þus 3e god wot' al *quod* sche
Nay cosyn myn it' stant' nou3t' so wiþ me /
ffor by þat' god þat' 3aff/ me soule and lyf'
In aH þe rewme of ffraunce is þer no wyf'
That' lasse lust' haþ to þat' sory pley
ffor I may synge allas and welawey
þat' I was born but' to no wight' *quod* sche
Dar I nou3t' telle how it stant' wiþ me
Wherfore I þenke out' of' þis lond to wende
Or elles of' myself' to make an ende /
So ful am I of' drede and of' care [leaf 206]
This monk' bygan vpon þis wyf' to stare
And sayde allas my neece god it' forbede
That' 3e for eny sorwe or ony drede
ffordo 3oure self' but' telleþ forþ 3oure greef'
*Per*aduenture I may in 3our mescheef'
Counseile or helpe and *þer*fore telleþ me
AH 3oure annoye for it' schal be secre
ffor on my portos I make an oth
þat' neuer in my lijf' for leef' ne loþ
Ne schal I of' no counseil 3ou bewreye
The same a3ein to 3ou *quod* sche I seye
By god and by þis portos I swere
þey men wolde me al to peeces tere

Ne schal I neuer for to go in to helle
Bewreye a word of' þing' þat' 3e me telle /
Nought' for no cosynage ne alliaunce
But' verreily for loue and affiaunce
Thus ben þey swore and her-vpon y-kiste
And ilk' of' hem tolde oþer what' hem liste
Cosyn q*uod* sche if' I hadde a space
As I haue non and namely in þis place
þanne wolde I telle a legende of' my lyf'
What' I haue suffred sethens I was a wyf'
Wiþ my*n* housband and þeigh he be 3our cosyn
Nay q*uod* þis monk' by god and by seint' Martyn
he nys no more cosyn vnto me
þan is þis leef' þat' hangeþ on þe tre
I clepe him so by seint' Denys in ff*r*aunce
To haue þe more cause of' acqueyntaunce
Of' 3ou which I haue loued specially
Abouen all wo*m*men sikerly
This were ynough on my professiõ
Telleþ 3oure greef' lest' þat' he come a-doun
And hasteþ 3ou and goþ 3oure wey anon
My deere loue q*uod* sche O daun Iohn
fful leef' me were þis counseil to hyde
But' out' it' mot' it' may no lenger abyde
myn housbond is to me þe worste man
þat' euer was sipenes þe world bygan
But' sipenes I am a wyf' it' sit nou3t me
To telle no wight' of' oure pryuyte
Neyþer a bedde ne in non o*þer* place
God schilde I scholde telle it' for his *grace*
A wyf' ne schal nat' seyn of' hire housband
But' all honour' as I can vnderstande
Saue vnto 3ou þus moche telle I schal
As help me god he nys nou3t' worþ at' al
In no degre þe value of' a flye
But' 3it me greueþ most' his nyggardye

[leaf 206, back]

And wel ȝe woot' þat' wo*m*men naturelly
Desyren þinges seuen as wel as I
þey wolden þat' here housbandes scholde be
hardy and wys riche and þer-to fre
And buxum to his wyf' and freissch a bedde
But' by þat' ilke lord þat' for vs bledde
ffor his honour my selue to arraye
A sonday next' I moste paye
An hundred ffrankes or elles am I lorn
ȝet' were me leuer þat' I were vnborn
þenne me were don a sclaunder or vilenye
And if' myn housbande eeke might aspye
I nere but' lost' and þerfore I ȝou preye
lene me þis so*m*me and elles mot' I deye
Daun Iohn I say lene me þese hundred frankes
Par de I wol not' fayle þe my þankes
If' þat' ȝou luste to do þat' I ȝou pray
ffor at' a certein day I wole ȝou pay
And do to ȝou what' plesaunce and seruise
That' I may do right' as ȝou lust' deuyse
And but' I do god take on me vengaunce
As foule as hadde genylon of ff*r*aunce
This gentil monk' answerde in þis manere [leaf 207]
Now trewely myn owen lady deere
I haue q*uod* he on ȝou so gret' a rouþe
That' I ȝou swere and pligħte ȝou my trouþe
That' whan ȝoure housbonde is to fflaundres fare
I wol delyuer ȝou out' of' þis worldes care /
ffor I wol bringen ȝou an hundred frankes
And wiþ þat' he caught' hir by þe schankes
And hire enbraced harde and kissed ofte
Goþ now ȝoure weye q*uod* he al stille and softe
And let' vs dyne as sone as euer ȝe may
ffor by my chilyndre it' is p*r*ime of' þe day
Goþ now and beþ as trewe as I schal be /
Now elles god forbede sire q*uod* sche

And forþ sche goþ as gelous as a pye
And bad þe cokes þat' þey schulde hem hye
So þat' men mighte dyne and þat anon
vp to hir housbonde is þis wyf' y-gon
And knokkeþ at his countour' boldely
Quy la *quod* he peter it' am I
Quoþ sche what' how longe wol ȝe faste /
how longe tyme wol ȝe rekne and caste
ȝoure so*mm*es ȝoure bokes and ȝoure þinges
þe deuyl haue part' on al̃ suche rekenynges
ȝe han ynough̃ parde of' goddes sonde
Come doun to day and lete ȝoure bagge stonde
Ne be ȝe nought' aschamed þat' Daun Iohn̄
Schal fastyng' al þis day elenge gon
What' lete vs heere masse go we dyne
Wyf' q*uod* þis man ful lytel canstow dyuyne
The curious busynesse þat' we haue
ffor of' vs chapmen so god me saue
And by þat' lord þat' called is seint' yue
Skarsly amonges twelue tweye schuln̄ þriue
Continuelly lastyng' vnto oure age
We may wel make chere and good visage
And dryue forþ þe world as it may be [leaf 207, back]
And kepen oure estate in priuite
Til we be deed or elles þat' we pleye
A pylgrymage or gon out' of' þe weye.
And *per*fore haue I gret' necessite
vpon þis queynte worlde to auyse me
ffor euermore we mote stande in drede
Of' happe and fortune in oure chapmanhede
To fflaundres wol I go to morne at' day
And come aȝein as sone as euer I may
ffor which my deere wyff' I þe beseke
As be to eu*er*y wight' buxom and meke
And for to kepe oure good be curious
And honestly gouerne wel oure hous

þou hast' ynough in eue*ry* maner wyse
That' to a thrifty housbonde may suffise 1436
The lakkeþ non array ne no vitayle
Of' Siluer in þi purs þou mayst' nou3t' fayle
And wiþ þat' word his countour dore he schette
And doun he goþ no lenger nolde he lette 1440
And hastyly a masse was þer sayde
And speedly þe tables were layde
And to þe dyner faste þey hem speede
And richely þis monk' þe Chapman fedde 1444
And after dyner daun Iohn soburly
This Chapman took' a part' al pryuyly
he seyde him þus cosyn it' standeþ so
þat' wel I see to Bruges wolle 3e go 1448
God and seint' austyn spede 3ou and gyde
I pray 3ou Cosyn wysly þat' 3e ryde
Gouerneþ 3ou also of' 3oure dyete
And temp*e*rally and namely in þis hete 1452
Bytwixe vs tuo needeþ no straunge fare
ffare wel cosyn god schilde 3ou fro care
If' eny þing' þer be by day or by night'
If' it' ligge in my power and my might' 1456
That' 3e me wol comaunde in eny wyse [leaf 208]
It' schal be doon right' as 3e wil deuyse
O þing' er þat' 3e gon if' þat' it' may be
I wolde preye 3ou for þe loue of' me 1460
An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye
ffor certeyn bestes þat' I moste beye
To store with a place þat' is owres
God helpe me I wolde þat' it' were 3owres 1464
I schal nought' fayle suerly of' my day
Nought' for a þousand frankes a myle way
But' lete þis þing' be secre I 3ou preye
3e schulle be payed wher þat' I lyue or deye 1468
And fare now wel myn owen cosyn dere
Graunt' m*er*cy of' 3oure cost' and of' 3oure chere

This noble marchaunt' gentilly anon
Answerde and sayde O Cosyn daun Iohn
Now sikerly þis is a smal requeste
My gold is 3oures whan þat' euer 3ou leste
And nought' oonly my gold but' my chaffare
Tak' what' 3ou leste god schilde þat' 3e spare
But' o þing' is 3e knowe it wel ynough
Of' chapmen þat here monee is here plough
We may creaunce whiles we haue a name /
But' goldles for to be it' is no game
Pay it' a3ein whan it' li3þ in 3our ese
After my migh't' ful fayn wolde I 3ou plese
þise hundred frankes he fette forþ anon
And pryuyly he took' hit' to daun Iohn
No wigh't' in al þis world wist of' þis lone
Sauyng' þis marchaunt' and daun Iohn allone
þey dranken and romed out' to pleye
Til þat' daun Iohn rydeþ to his abbeye
þe morne came and forþ þis marchaunt' rydeþ
To fflaundres ward his prentys wel him gydeþ
Til he cam in to Bruges meryly
Now goþ þis marchaunt' faste and bysyly
Aboute his neede and byeþ and creaunceþ [leaf 208, back]
he neyþer pleyeþ at' þe dys ne daunceþ
But' as a marchand schortly for to telle
he leet' his wyf' and þer I lete him dwelle
þe sonday next' þe marchaunt' was agon
To seint' Denys I-comen is Daun Iohn
Wiþ croune and berde freissch and newe schaue
In al þe hous þer nas so lite a knaue
Ne no wigh't' elles þat' he nas fayn
ffor þat' my lord doun Iohn was come agayn
And schortly to here poynt' for to gon
þis fayre wyf' acordeþ to daun Iohn
And for þis hundred ffrankes he schulde al nigh't'
haue hire in his armes bolt' vprigh't'

And þis acorde parfourmed was in dede
In myrþe al nightꝰ / a busy lyfꝰ þey lede
Til itꝰ was day þatꝰ daun Iohn wentꝰ his way
And bade þe meyne far wel haue good day
ffor non ofꝰ hem ne no wightꝰ in þe toun
haþ ofꝰ daun Iohn rightꝰ non suspecioun
and forþ he rydeþ home to his abbay
Or wher him luste no more ofꝰ him I say
This marchauntꝰ whan þatꝰ ended was þe ffayre
To seintꝰ Denys he gan for to repayre
And wiþ his wyfꝰ he makeþ feste and chere
And telleþ hire þatꝰ chaffare is so deere
þatꝰ needes moste he make a Cheuesaunce
ffor he was bounden in a reconysaunce
To paye xx þousand scheldes anon
ffor which þis marchauntꝰ is y-wontꝰ to gon
To borwe ofꝰ certein frendes þatꝰ he hadde
A certeyn frankes and some wiþ him he ladde
And whan þatꝰ he was come in to þe toun
ffor gretꝰ chierte and gret/ affeccioun
vnto daun Iohn he ferstꝰ him goþ to pleye
Noughtꝰ for to borwe ofꝰ him no moneye
Butꝰ for to wite and se ofꝰ his welfare [leaf 209]
And for to tellen him ofꝰ his chaffare
As frendes don when þey ben mette in feere
Daun Iohn him makeþ feste and mery cheere
And he him tolde azein ful specially
how he hadde broughtꝰ ful wel and graciously
þanked be god al hool his marchaundise
Saue þatꝰ he moste in aꝰ maner wyse
Maken a cheuysance as for his beste
And þenne he schulde be in ioye and reste
Daun Iohn answerde certes I am fayn
þatꝰ ze in hele be come home agayn
And ifꝰ þatꝰ I were riche as haue I blisse
Ofꝰ twenty þousand scheldes scholde ze nouztꝰ misse

ffor ȝe so kyndely þis oþer day
Lente me golde as I can and may
I þanke ȝou by god and by seint' Iame
But' naþeles I took' vnto oure dame
ȝoure wyf' at' home þe same gold aȝain
vpon ȝoure benche sche wot' it' wel certain
By certein toknes þat' I can hire telle /
Now by ȝoure leue I may no lenger dwelle
Oure abbot' wol out' of' þis toun anon
And in his companye mot' I gon
Gret' wel oure dame myn owen nece swete
And fare wel dere cosyn til we mete
This marchaunt' wiþ þat' was ful war and wys
Creaunsed haþ and eek' payed in Parys
To certein lumbardes redy in here hand
þis somme of' gold and gat' of' hem þe band
And home he goþ mery as popyngay
ffor wel he knew he stood in such aray
þat' needes moste he wynne in such a viage
A þousend frankes abouen al his costage
his wyf' ful redy mette him atte gate
As sche was wont of' old vsage algate
And al þat' night' in mirþe þey besette / [leaf 209, back]
ffor he was riche and clerly out' of' dette
Whan it' was day þis marchant' gan enbrace /
his wyf' al newe and kissed hire on hire face
And vp he goþ and makeþ it' wonder tough
No more q*uod* sche by god ȝe haue ynough
And wantounly aȝein wiþ him sche pleyde
Tille atte laste þat' þis marchant' seyde
By god q*uod* he I am a litel wroþ
Wiþ ȝou my wyf' þough it' be me loth
And wote ȝe why by god as þat' I gesse
ffor ye haue made a maner straungenesse
Bytwixen me and my cosyn daun Ioh̃n
ȝe schulde haue warned me er I hadde gon

þat' he hadde 3ou an hundred frankes payed
By redy tokne and he him held yuel payed
ffor þat' I to him spak' of' cheuysaunce
Me semed so as by his contynaunce
But' naþeles by god and heuen king'
I þoughte nought' to axe of' him' no þing'
I pray þe wyf' ne do no more so
Telle me alway er þat' I fro þe go
If' eny dettour haþ in myn absence
I-payed þe leste þurgh þin necligence
I might' him axe a þing' þat' he haþ payed
þis was nas nough affered ne affrayed
But' boldely sche seyde and þat' anon
Mary I diffye þat' false monk' daun Iohn
I kepe nought' of' his tokenes neuer a deel
he tok' me certein gold þis wot' I wel
What' euele þedam on his monkes snowte /
ffor god it' wot' I wende wiþouten doute /
þat' he hadde 3oue it' me by cause of' 3ou
To do þer wiþ myn honour and my prow
ffor cosynage and eek' for bele chere
þat' he haþ had fulofte tyme heere[1]
But' seþins I see I stonde in such disioynt'
I wol answere 3ou schortly to þis poynt'
3e haue mo slakker dettours þen am I
ffor I wol paye 3ow wel and redily
ffro day to day and if' so be I fayle
I am 3our wyf' score it' vpon my tayle
And I schal paye as sone as euer I may
ffor by my troupe I haue on myn array
And nought' on waste bestowed euery del
And for I haue bestowed it' so wel
To 3oure honour for goddes sake I say
As be nought' wroþ but' lete vs laughe and play
3e schuln my ioly body haue to wedde /
By god I nyl nought' paye 3ou but' a bedde

[1] *Skip a leaf which is headed* Thopas. [leaf 211]

ffor3iue it' me myn owen spouse deere /
Turne hiderward and makeþ bettre cheere
This marchaunt' seyh þer was no remedye
And for to chyde it' nere but' folye /
Seþins þat' þe þing' may nought' amended be
Now wyf' he sayde and I for3iue it' þe
But' by þin lyf' ne be ne more so large
kepe bet' my good þis 3iue I þe in charge /
þus endeþ now my tale and god vs sende
Toylyng' ynough vnto oure lyues ende ¶ Explicit' 1624

Here endeþ þe schipmannes tale

WEl seyde by corpus *dominus*
Now lange mote þou sayle by þe coste
Sire gentil mayster gentil marynere /
God 3iue þe monk' a þousand last' quade 3ere / 1628
A ha felawes beþ war of' such a Iape /
þe monk' putte in þe mannes hood an ape /
And in his wyues eek' by seint' austyn
Draweþ no monkes more in to 3oure In 1632
But' now passe ouer and let' vs seke aboute
Who schal now telle ferst' of' al þis route
Anoþer tale and wiþ þat' word he sayde
As curteysly as it' hadde ben a mayde [leaf 211, back]
My lady prioresse by 3our leue
So þat' I wiste I schulde 3ou nought' greue /
I wolde deme þat' 3e telle schulde
A tale next' if' so were þat' 3e wolde 1640
Now wole 3e fouche sauf' my lady deere /
Gladly quoþ sche and sayde in þis manere

[*No gaps between the stanzas.*]

, Here begynneth þe tale of' Alma redemptoris þe prioresses Tale. ¶ Prologe

¶ Domine dominus noster

O lord oure lord þin name how merueilous
Is in þis large word y-spredde quod she
ffor nought' only þyn laud precious
Parfourned is by men of' dignite
But' by þe mouth of' children þin bounte
Parformed is for on oure brest' soukynge
Som tyme schewen þey þin heryynge

¶ Wherfore in laude as I can best' or may
Of' þe and of' þe white lyly flour
Which þat' þe bar and is a mayde alwey
To telle a story I wol don my labour
Nought' þat' I may encrece hire honour
ffor sche hireself' is honour and perto roote /
Of' bounte next' hire sone of' soules boote

¶ O mooder mayde O mayde moder fre
O busch vnbrent' brennyng' in moyses sight'
That' rauyscheþ doun fro þe deytele
þurgh þin humbles þe gost' þat' in þe alight'
Of' whos vertu whan he in þin herte alight'
Conceyued was þe fadres sapience
Help me to telle it' in þin reuerence

¶ Lady þin bounte and þin magnificence
þin vertu and þin gret' humilite
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science
ffor som tyme lady er men preye to þe
þou gost' biforn and þin benignite
And getest' vs to light' þurgh þin prayere
To gyden vs vnto þin sone so clere [leaf 212]

My connyng' is to wayk' o blisful queene
ffor to declare þin grete worþinesse
That' I ne may þe weighte nought' susteene /
But' as a childe of' xij monthe elde or lesse
That' can vnneþes any word expresse /
Right' so fare I and þerfore I 3ou preye
Gydeþ my song' þat' I schal of' 3ou seye

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther was in a cite in a gret' cite
Amonges cristen folk' and Iewerye
Susteyned by a lord of' þat' cuntre
ffor foule vsure and lucre of' vilanye
hatful to crist' and to his companye
And þurgh þe strete men mighte ryde or wende
ffor it' was fre and open at' euery ende

A lytel scole of' cristen folk' þer stood
Doun at' þe furþer ende in which þer were
Children an heepe y-come of' cristes blood
That' lered in þat' scole 3ere by 3eere
Such maner doctrine as men vsed þere
This is to say to syngen and to rede
As smale children doun in here childhede

Among' þis children was a wydewes sone
A litel clergoun vij 3er of' age
That' day by day to scole was his wone /
And eek' also wher he saugh the ymage /
Of' cristes mooder hadde he in vsage
As him was taught' to knele a doun and seye
his aue marie as he goþ by þe weye

Thus haþ þis wydewe hire litel child y-tauȝt
Oure blisful lady cristes mooder deere /
To worschipe ay and he forgat it nought
ffor sely child wol alday sone lere
But ay whan I remembre me on þis matere
Seynt Nicholas stant euer in my presence
ffor he so ȝonge to crist dede reuerence

¶ This child his litel book lernynge [leaf 212, back]
As he sat in þe scole at his primere
he alma redemptoris herde synge /
As children lerned here antiphoner
And as he durste he drouȝ him ner and neer
And herkned ay þe wordes and þe noote /
Til he þe firste vers couþe al by roote /

Nouȝt wiste he what þe latyn was to say
ffor he so ȝong and tender was of age /
But on a day his felawe gan he preye
To expounen him þis song in his langage /
Or tellen him why þis song was in vsage /
This preyde he him to construe and declare /
fful ofte tyme vpon his knees bare /

his felawe which þat elder was þan he
Answerde him þus þis song I haue herd say
Was maked of oure blisful lady fre
hire to salue and eeke hire for to pray
To ben oure helpe and socour whan we deye
I can no more expounde in þis matiere
I lerne song I can but smale gramere /

¶ And is þis song ymade in reuerence
Of cristes mooder sayde þis Innocent
Now certes I wol don my diligence
To konne it er Cristemas be went

þoughꝫ þatꝫ I for my prymer schal be schent
And schal [be] beten þries in an houre
I wol itꝫ konne oure lady to honoure 1733

¶ his felawe taughtꝫ him homward pryuyly
ffro day to day til he couþe it by roote
And þenne he sangꝫ itꝫ wel and boldely
ffro word to word accordyngꝫ to þe note / 1737
þries on a day itꝫ passeþ þurghꝫ his þrote /
To scoleward and homward whan he wentꝫ
On cristes moder sette was his entent/ 1740

As I haue sayde þurghoutꝫ þe Iewerie
This litel childe as he came to and fro [leaf 213]
ffull meryly þen wolde he synge and crye /
On alma redemptoris euermo 1744
The swetnes haþ his herte perced so
Ofꝫ cristes mooder þatꝫ to hure to preye
He can noughtꝫ stynte ofꝫ syngynge by þe weye / 1747

¶ Oure firste foo þe serpentꝫ Sathanas
Thatꝫ haþ in Iewes his waspes neste
vp swalle and sayde O Ebrayke poeple allas /
Is þis a þingꝫ to ȝou þatꝫ is honeste / 1751
þatꝫ suche a boy schal walken as him leste /
In ȝoure despite and syngen ofꝫ such sentence
Which is aȝein oure lawes reuerence / 1754

¶ ffro þennes forth þe Iewes han conspired
This Innocentꝫ outꝫ of þis world to chace
In homicidie þer-to han þey hyred
þatꝫ in an aley had a pryue place 1758
And as þe childe gan forby for to pace
þis cursed Iew him hente and heeld faste
And cutte his þrote and in a putte him caste / 1761

¶ I say þat' in a wardrobe þey him drewe /
Wher as þise Iewes purgen entraille
O' cursed folk' of' heroudes al newe /
What' may 3oure euyl entent' 3ou auayle /
Mordre wole out' certain it' wol nought' fayle
And namely þere honour of' god schulde sprede
þe blood out' cryeþ on 3our cursed dede

¶ O martyr sonded to virginite
Now maystow syngen folwyng' euer in oon
The white lambe celestial quod he /
Of' which þe grete eu*a*ungelist' seint' Iohn
In Pathmos wrot' which seiþ þey þat' gon
Byforn þis lambe and synge a song' al newe
þat' neuer fleisschly wo*m*men þey knewe

¶ þis pore wydewe wayteþ al þat' nigħt'
After þis litel childe but' hom cam he nou3t'
ffor whom as sone as it' was dayes ligħt' [leaf 213, back]
Wiþ face pale for drede and busy þoughţ
Sche haþ at' scole and elles wher him soughţ
Til fynally sche gan so fer aspye
þat' he was seyn last' in þe Iewerye

¶ With moodres pyte in hire brest' enclosed
Sche goþ as þough sche were half' out' of' mynde /
To euery place where sche haþ supposed
By lyklyhede hire childe for to fynde
And euer on cristes moder meke and kynde
Sche cryed and at' þe laste þus sche wrought'
Among' þe cursed Iewes sche him sought'

Sche freyneþ and sche preyeþ pitously
To euery Iewe þat' dwelt' in þilke place
To telle hire if' hire child went' hem by
They sayden nay but' ihesus[1] of' his grace [[1] MS ihc]

ȝaf' in hire þoughtʼ wiþ-in a litel space
þatʼ in þatʼ place after hire sone sche cryede
þer he was caste in a putte besyde 1796

¶ O grete lord þatʼ p*ar*formed þin laude
By mouþ ofʼ Innocence lo here þy mightʼ
This gemme ofʼ chastite þis Emeraude
And eekʼ ofʼ martirdome þe ruby brightʼ 1800
þer he wiþ þrote y-korue lay vprightʼ
he alma redemptoris gan to synge
So loude þatʼ al þe place gan to rynge 1803

¶ The cristen folkʼ þatʼ þurgh þe strete went
In comen for to wondren on þis þingʼ
And hastely þey for þe prouostʼ sent
he came anon wiþouten eny taryyngʼ 1807
And herieþ cristʼ þatʼ is ofʼ heuen kingʼ
And eekʼ his mooder honour ofʼ mankynde
And after þatʼ þe Iewes letʼ he bynde 1810

This childe wiþ pitous lamentacion̄
vp taken syngyngʼ his songʼ alway
And with honour and gret p*ro*cession̄ /
They carien him to þe nextʼ abbay [leaf 214]
his moder swownyngʼ by þe bere lay
vnneþes mighte þe poeple þatʼ was þere
This newe rachel bringe fro his bere 1817

Wiþ tormentʼ and with schameful deþ ilkon
This prouostʼ doþ þis Iewes for to sterue
Thatʼ ofʼ þis moerdre wiste and þatʼ anon
he nolde non such cursednesse obserue / 1821
Euel schal haue þatʼ euel wol deserue
þerfore with̄ wilde hors he dede him drawe
And after þatʼ he hynge him by þe lawe 1824

¶ Vpon þis beere ay liþ þis Innocent'
Biforn þe chief' auter whiles masse last'
And after þat' þe abbot'/ wiþ his couent
hadde spedde him for to burye him als fast
And whan þey halywater on him cast'
3it' spak' þe child when spreynt' was þe holy water
And sang' O alma redemptoris mater

¶ This abbot' which þat' was an holy man
As monkes be*n* or elles oughten to[1] be [[1] ? to *later*]
This 3onge childe to coniure he bigan
And sayde O deere childe I hailse þe
By vertu of' þe holy trinite
Telle me what' is þy cause for to synge
Sipenes þat' þy þrote is kutte at my semynge

¶ My þrote is cutte vnto my nekke bon
Sayde þis childe and as by way of' kynde
I schulde haue deyed 3e long' tyme agon
But' ih*esu* crist' as 3e in bookes fynde
Wol þat' his glorie laste and be in mynde
And for þe worschipe of' his moder deere /
3et' may I synge O alma lowde and cleere

¶ This welle of' mercy crystes mooder swete
I loued alwey as after my konnyng'
And whan þat' I my lyff' schulde lete
To me sche cam and bad me for to synge
This anteme verraily in my mynde deynge [leaf 214, back].
as 3e haue herd and when þat' I hadde songe
Me þoughť sche leyde a greyn vpon my tonge /

¶ Wherfore I synge and synge moot' certein
In honour of' þe blisful martir fre
Til of' my tonge of' taken is þe greyn
And after þat' sayde sche þus to me

My litel childe now wol I fecche þe
Whan þat' þy grein is fro þy tonge y-take
Be nought' a-gast' I wol þe nought' forsake

¶ þis holy monk' þis abbot' him mene I
his tunge out' caught' / and took' awey þe greyn
And he 3af' up þe gost' ful softely
And when þis abbot / hadde þis wonder seyn
his salte teeres stryked doun as reyn
And gruff' he fell al plat' vnto þe grounde
And stille he lay as he hadde ben y-bounde /

¶ þe couent' eek' lay vppon þe pauyment'
Wepyng' and herying' cristes moder deere
And after þat' þay ryse and for ben went'
And toke awey þis martir fro his bere /
And in a tombe of' marbill stones clere
Enclosen þey his litel body swete
Ther he is now god leue vs for to mete

¶ O 3onge hewe of' lincolle slayn also
Wiþ cursed Iewes as it' is notable
ffor it' nys but' a litel while ago
Preye eek' for vs we synful folk' vnstable
That' of' his mercy god so merciable
On vs his grete mercy multiplye
ffor reuerence of' his mooder marie AmeN ¶ Explicit' //

Whan seyde was þis tale euery man
As sober was þat wonder was to se
Til þat owre Oste Iape þo bygan
And þenne at erst he loked vpon me ¶ Chaucere
And sayde þus what man art þou quod he
Thou lokest as þou woldest fynde an hare / [leaf 215]
ffor euer vpon þe ground I se þe stare 1887

Approche ner and loke meryly
Now ware 3ou sires and let þis man han place
he in þe waste is schapen as wel as I
This were a popet in armes to embrace 1891
ffor any womman smal and fair of face
he semeþ eluyssch by his contynaunce
ffor vnto no wight doþ he dalyaunce 1894

Say now somwhat sepins oþer folk han sayd
Telle vs a tale of merþe and þat anon
Oste quod I ne be nought yuel a-payde
ffor oþer tale certes can I non 1898
But of a Ryme I lerned longe agon
3e þat is good quod he schuln we here
Som deynte þing me þinkeþ by his cheere. 1901

[*No gaps between the stanzas in the MS.*]

¶ Here bygynneth þe tale of Chaucer of sire Thopas
Ca^m xix^m

[*Fytte I.*]

LEsteneþ lordes in good entent
And I wol telle verrament
Of miracle and solace
Al of a knight was fayr and gent
In bataille and in tornament
His name was sire Thopace

I-born he was in ferre cuntre
In fflaundres al beȝonde þe se
At poperyng in þe place
his fader was a man ful fre
And lord he was of þat contre
As it was goddes grace

Sire Thopas was a doughty swayn
Whyt was his face as Payndemayn
his lyppes reed as Rose
his robe is like Scarlet en grayn
And I ȝou telle in good certayn
he hadde a semely nose

his berd his heer was lik saffroun
That to his gurdel straught a-doun [leaf 215, back]
his schoon of Cordewayne /
Of Bruges were his hosen broun
his robe was of Ciclatoun
That coste many a Iayne

he coupe hunte at' wylde deer
And Ryde an haukynge by þe ryuer
Wiþ gray goshauk' on honde
Ther to he was a good archer
Of' wrastlyng' was þer non his peer
Ther any man schulde stonde

fful many a mayde bright' in bour
They mourne for him *par*amour
When þey were bet' to slepe
But' he was chaste and no lecchour
And swete as is þe bremble flour
þat' bereþ þe rede hepe

¶ And so byfell vpon a day
ffor sope as I 3ou telle may
Sire Thopas wolde out' ryde
he worþe vpon his steede gray
And in his hande a launcegay
A long' sword by his syde

he prikeþ þurgh a fair forest'
Ther Inne is many a wilde beest'
3e bope bucke and hare
And as he prikeþ north and Est'
I telle 3ou him hadde almest'
Betydde a sory care

Ther springen herbes grete and smale
The lycoris and þe Setuale
And many a clowe Gylofre
And notemuges to put' in ale
Wheper it' be moyst' or stale
Or for to leye in Coffre

The briddes syngen it' is nou3t' nay
The sperhauk' and þe popyngay [leaf 216]
That' Ioye it' was to heere /
The þrostilkok made eek' his lay
The woode dowfe vpon þe spray
Sche sang' ful loude and cleere

Sire Thopas feH in loue longyng'
And whan he herde þe þrustel syng'
And priked as he were wood
his faire steede in his prikynge
So swette þat' men mighT him wrynge
his sydes were al blood

Syre Thopas eek' so wery was
ffor prykyng' on þe softe gras
So fers was his corage
That' doun he leyde him in þat' place
To maken his steede som solace
ffor he was so sauage

O seynt' mary benedicite
What' eyleþ þis loue at' me
To bynde me so sore
Me dremed al þis night' parde
An elf' queen schal my lemman be
And slepe vnder my gore

An Elf' queene wol I loue ywys
ffor in þis worlde no man is
Worþy to be my make
in toune
AH oþre wo*mm*en I forsake
And to an elf' queen I me bytake
By dale and eek' by downe

In to his sadel he cam anon
And prikeþ ouer stile and ston
And elfᵗ queene for to aspie
Til he so longe haþ ryden and gon
Thatᵗ he fond in a priue woon
The cuntre of fayrye
¶ So wylde
ffor in þatᵗ cuntre nas þer non [leaf 216, back]
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Neyþer wijfᵗ ne childe /

Til him þer cam a Ioly geauntᵗ
his name was cleped sire Olyphaunt
A perilous man ofᵗ dede
he seyde child by Termagaunt
Butᵗ ifᵗ þou prike outᵗ ofᵗ myn hauntᵗ
Anon I slee þin steede
¶ Wiþ mace
here is þe queene ofᵗ fayerye
Wiþ harpe and pype and Synphonye
dwellynge in þis place /

The childe seyde so mote I þe
To morne wol I meeten þe
When I haue myn armure
And ȝitᵗ I hope par ma fay
Thatᵗ þou schaltᵗ wiþ þis launcelay
Abeyen itᵗ ful sore
¶ þurgh̄ þine mawe /
Schal I perce ifᵗ I may
Or itᵗ be fully pryme day
ffor heere þou schaltᵗ be slawe /

Sire Thopas drow a bak' ful faste
þis geaunt' at' him stones caste /
Out' of' a felle staf' slynge.
But' faire askapeþ child Thopas
And al it' was þurgh goddes gras
And þurgh his faire berynge

3it' lesteneþ lordes to my tale/
Murier þen þe nightyngale
ffor now I wole 3ou roune /
how sire Thopas with sydes smale /
Prykyng' ouer downe and dale /
Is come a3ain to toune

his mery men comaunded he /
To maken him boþe game and glee
ffor needes moste he fight'
Wiþ o geaunt' with hedes þre
ffor *paramour* and Iolyte [*go back to leaf* 210
Of' on þat' schon ful bright'

Do come he seyde myne menstrales
And gestours for to telle vs tales /
Anon in myn armyng'
Of' Romances þat' ben realles /
Of' popes and of' Cardynalles /
And eek' of' loue lykyng'

They fette him ferst' þe[1] swete wyn [1 *wrongly dotted under*]
[. . . . . [*In margin of MS, in a later hand,* {And mede eek in a mas ... & ryal spicerye. Of gyngebreed þat was f..]
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
And lycoryus and eek' comyn
Wiþ sucre þat' is trye

He dede next' his white leere
Of' clop of' lake fyn and clere
A breche and eek' a scherte 2049
And next' his scherte an aketoun
And ouer pat' an habergoun
ffor persyng' of' his herte 2052

And ouer pat' a fyn hauberk'/
Was al y-wrought' of' Iewes werk'
fful strong' it' was of' plate 2055
And ouer pat' his cote armure /
As whyt' as is a lyly flour
In which he wole debate 2058

his schelde was al of' gold so red
And per Inne was a boores heed
A charbokil him [1] besyde [1 bi his syde in a later hand] 2061
And per he swore on ale and breed
That' pe geaunt' schulde be deed
betyde what' betyde 2064

his Iambes were of' quyrboyly
his swerdes schepe of' yuory
his helme of' latoun brigh̄t' 2067
his sadel was of' ruel bon
his bridel as pe sonne schon
Or as pe mone so ligh̄t' 2070

his spere was of' fyn Cypres
That' bedep werre and no ping' pees [back of leaf 210]
The heed ful scharpe y-grounde 2073
his steede was al dappel gray
It' gop an ambel by pe way
ful softely and rounde 2076

In londe
Lo lordes myne heere[1] a fytte [[1] ys, *put in by a later hand*]
If ȝe wole eny more of hitte
To telle it wol I fonde

[*Fytte II.*]

Now halde ȝoure mouþe *par* charite
Boþe knight and lady fre
And herkneþ to my spelle
Of bataile and of chiualry
And of ladyes loue drery
Anon I wol ȝou telle

Men speke of Romance of prys
Of horn child and of ypotys
Of Beuys and sire Gy
Of sire libeus and pleyndamour
But sire Thopas he bereþ þe flour
Of real chiualry

his goode steed al he bestrod
And forþ upon his way he glod
As sparcles out of þe bronde
vpon his crest he bar a tour
And *þer* Inne styked a lily flour
God schilde his corps fro schonde

And for he was a knight aunterous
he nolde slepen in non hous
But liggen in his hood
his brighte helme was his wanger
And by him bayteþ his destrer
Of herbes fyne and goode

GROUP **B.** § **8.** SIR THOPAS. **Corpus MS.**

[. . . . . [*In a later hand, in the margin, is* him self drank water of þe welle as dede þe knyȝt sire Percyuelle so worþili vnder wede]

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 2108

NO more of' þis for goddes dignite [*on leaf* 210, *back*]
Quoþ oure hoste for þou makest' me
So wery of' þy lewednes
That' also wisly god me bles 2112
Myn eres ake of' þin darsty speche [*go on to leaf* 217]
Now such a rymere þe deuel y beteche
This may be wel rym dogerell *quod* he
Why so *quod* I why wilt' þou lette me 2116
More of' my tale þan anoþer man
Seþens it' is þe beste Rym I can
By god *quod* he pleynly I þe say
þou schalt' no lenger rymen heere to day 2120
Thow dost' nought' elles but' dispendest' tyme
Sire at' O word þou schalt' no lengere ryme
Let' se whether þou canst' telle ought' in geste
Or telle in prose somwhat' at' þe leste 2124
In which þer be som merþe and som doctrine
Gladly quod I by goddes swete pyne
I wol 3ou telle a litel þing' in prose
þat' oughte like 3ou as I suppose / 2128
Or elles certeyn 3e ben to daungerous
It' is a moral tale vertuous
Al be it' tolde somtyme in sondry wyse
Of' sondry folk' as I schal 3ou deuyse 2132
As þus 3e wote euery euaungeliste
That' telleþ vs of' ihesu criste
Ne saiþ nou3t' al þing' as his felawe doþ
But' natheles here sentence is al soþ 2136
And all acorden as in here sentence
Al be þer in here tellyng' difference

ffor some of hem seyn more and some lesse
Whan þey his pytous passioun expresse
I mene of mark matheu luke and Iohn
But douteles here sentence is al on
Therfore lordinges all I 3ou beseche
If þat 3e þinke I varie in my speche
As þus if þat I telle somwhat more
Of prouerbis þen 3e haue herd byfore
Comprehendit in þis litel tretis heere
To enforce with þeffecte of my matiere
And þough I nadde[1] þe same wordes saye [leaf 217, back] [1 nat *in a later hand*]
As 3e han herd 3it to alle 3ou I praye
Blameþ me nought for as in my sentence
3e schal nought fynde mochil difference /
ffro þe sentence of þe tretys lyyte[2] [2 lite *in a later hand*]
After þe which þis mery tale I wryte
And[3] herkene what I schal seye [3 *þerfore added on margin of MS in another hand*]
And let me telle my tale I 3ou preye /

[*There are no line-numbers or breaks between the paragraphs in the MS. Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept here to prevent slight differences in the Six Texts throwing out many lines.*]

[*Corpus MS, on leaf* 217, *back.*]

¶ C^m. xx^m.

Here bygynneþ Chauceres tale of Melibe and his wyf Prudence and his doughter Sapience

[2157] A ȝong man whilom called Melibe mighty & riche bigate vpon his wyf þat called was Prudence. a doughter which þat cleped was Sapience

[2158] ¶ vpon a day felle þat he for his disporte is went in to þe feeldes him to pleye [2159] his wyf and eek his doughter haþ he lefte wiþinne his hous of which þe dores weren faste schette. [2160] ffoure of his olde foos han it aspyed. and setten ladderes to þe walles of his hous and by þe wyndowes ben y-entred [2161] ¶ and beeten his wyf and wounded his doughter with fyue mortaille woundes in .v. sondry places. [2162] þis is to say in hire feet in hire hand. in hire eeres in hire nose in hire mouþ ¶ and laften hire for deed and wenten here wey

[2163] ¶ When Melibeus retourned was aȝein in-til his hous and sawe al þis meschief ¶ he y-like a mad man rendyng his cloþes gan to weepe and crye

[2164] ¶ Prudence his wyf as ferforþ as sche dorste bysought him of his weepyng for to stynte [2165] ¶ but nouȝt for-þy he gan to wepe and crye euer lenger þe more

[2166] ¶ This noble wyf prudence remembred hire on þe sentence of Ovide in his bok þat cleped is þe remedy of loue where he saiþ [2167] he is a fool þat distourbeþ þe mooder for to wepe in þe deþ of hire childe til sche haue wepte hire fille as for a certein tyme [2168] Then schal man don his diligence *with* amyable wordes hire to comforte and to preye hire of

hire wepyng' for to stynte [2169] ¶ ffor which resoun þis noble prudence suffred hire housbond for to weepe and crye as for a certeyn space [2170] ¶ And when sche saugh hire tyme sche seyde him in þis wyse ¶ Allas my lord *quod* sche why make ȝe ȝoure self' for to be ylike a fool [2171] ffor soþe it' aper*ty*neþ nouȝt' to a wise man to maken such a sorwe [2172] ¶ ȝoure doughter wiþ þe grace [1]of god schal be warisshed and askape [2173] ¶ And alle were it' so þat' sche right' now were deed: ȝe oughte nouȝt' as for hire deþ ȝoure self' to destryue [2174] ¶ Senek' saiþ þe wiseman schal nouȝt' take to gret' discomfort' for þe deþ of' his children [2175] but' certes he schulde suffre it' in pacience as wel as he abydeþ þe deþ of' his owen *pro*pre *per*sone

[2176] ¶ This Melibeus answerde anon and sayde ¶ What' man *quod* he schulde of' his wepyng' stynte þat' haþ so gret' a cause for to weepe [2177] ¶ Ih*esus* cr*ist'* oure lord himself' wepte for þe deþ of' lazarus his freend [2178] ¶ Prudens answerde ¶ certes wel I woot' a-tempre weepyng' is nouȝt' defendid vnto him þat' sorwful is among' folk' in sorwe ¶ But' it' is raþer y-gr*a*unted him to wepe [2179] ¶ The apostel Poule. vnto þe Romayns writeþ. Man schal reioyse wiþ hem þat' maken ioye ¶ And weepen wiþ suche folk' as wepen [2180] ¶ But þoughh a-tempre wepynge be y-gr*a*unted Outragous weepyng' certes is defended [2181] ¶ Mesurable wepyng' schulde be considered after þe lore þat' techeþ vs Senek ¶ Senek/ [2182] ¶ Whan þat' þi freend is deed, let' noughht' þin yen to moyste ben of' teeres ne to druye ¶ Al þoughh þe teeres comen of' þin eyen let' hem nouȝt' fallen [2183] ¶ And whan þou hast' forgon þi frende I rede þou do þy diligence to gete þe anoþ*er*. and þis is more wiser þan for to wepe for þyn freend þe which þat' þou hast' lore ¶ ffor þer-in is no boote [2184] ¶ And þerfore if' þou lust' gouerne þe by Sapience: putte awey sorwe of' ȝoure herte. [2185] ¶ Remembreþ ȝou þat' Ih*esus* Cyrak' / seiþ ¶ Ihesus Cyrak /

a man þat' is Ioyous and glad in herte hit' him conserueþ florisching' in his age ¶ But' soþly sorwful herte makeþ his bones dryue [2186] ¶ he saiþ eek þus
¶ Salomon ¶ þat' sorwe in herte sleþ ful many a man) [2187] Salamon. seiþ þat' right' as moughtes in þe schepes flees annoyeþ to þe cloþes and þe smale wormes of' þe trees ¶ Right' so anoyeþ sorwe to þe herte [2188] ¶ Wherfore we ouȝt as wel in þe deþ of' oure children as in þe losse of' oure good haue pacience

¶ Iob [2189] ¶ Remembreþ ȝow vpon þe pacient' Iob. whan he hadde lost' his children and his temperel substañce / In his body endured and suffred many a greuous temptacion ¶ ȝet' sayde he þus [2190] ¶ Oure lord *quod* he haþ ȝoue it' me ¶ Oure lord haþ byreft' it' me Right' so as oure lord haþ wolde right' so be it don. y-blessed be þe name of oure lord [2191] ¶ To þese afore þinges Melibeus answerde to his wyf' dame Prudence / Alle þine wordes *quod* he ben soþe and *per*to profitable ¶ But' trewly myn herte is troubled wiþ þis sorwe so greuously þat' I not' what' to done [2192] ¶ let' calle *quod* Prudence þin trewe frendes alle and þin lynage whiche þat' ben wise Telle hem þyn [caas] [1] and herkne what' þay say in counseillynge and ȝou gouerneth *per after* here
Salomon sentence [2193] Salomon saiþ werk' alle þing' by counseil and þou schalt' neuer repente þe

[2194] ¶ Thenne by þe counseil of' his wyf' dame Prudence: Melibeus let' callen a gret' congregacioñ of folk' [2195] [. . . . . *no gap*] olde and ȝonge and some of' his olde enemys reconsiled as by here semblañt in to his loue and in to his *grace* [2196] ¶ And *per*-wiþ-al *per* come somme of his olde neyghebours and þat' deden him reuerence more for drede þan for loue as it' happeþ ofte [2197] ¶ Ther comeþ also ful many subtile flaterers and wyse aduocatis lerned in þe lawe

[2198] And whan þis folk / togidre assembled were: This Melibeus in sorwful wise schewed hem þis caas

[2199] ¶ And by þe manere of' þis speche he bar in his herte a cruel yre redy to don vengeaunce vpon his foos And sodeynly desired þat' þe werre schulde begynne [2200] ¶ But' naþeles ȝit' asked he here counseil vpon þis matere [2201] A Surgien by licence and assent' of' suche as were wyse vp ros vnto Melibeus and sayde as ȝe may heere

[2202] Sire q*uod* he as to vs surgiens aperteyneþ to eu*er*y wigh̄t' þe beste þat' we can were as we ben wiþholde ¶ And to oure paciences þat' we do no damages [2203] þ*er*fore it happeþ many tymes and ofte þat' when tuo men haue euerich wounded oþ*er* O same Surgien heleþ hem boþe [2204] ¶ Wherfore vnto oure art' it' nys nouȝt' p*er*tynent' to norische werre ne parties to supporte [2205] ¶ But' certes as to þe warisshyng' of' ȝour doughte*r* be it' so þat' sche is p*er*ilously wounded: we schulde do so ententyfly busynes fro day to night' þat' wiþ þe grace of' god sché schal be sound and hool as sone as it' is possible [2206] ¶ Alle men in þis same wyse answerden and þe Phisiciens. saue þat' þay sayden a fewe wordes more [2207] þat' right' as maladies ben heled by þe contraries Righ̄t' so schal men warissche werre by vengaunce [2208] his neygheburs fulle of' enuye his feynede freendes þat' semed reconsiled his flaterers [2209] maden semblaunt of' wepyng' enpeyred and engregged meche of' his matiere in preysynge gretly Melibeus of' might' of' power of' riches and of' frendes despysynge þe power of' his aduersaries [2210] and sayden outrely þat' he anon schulde awreken him on his enemys and begynne werre

[2211] ¶ Vp ros þanne an aduoket' þat' was wys and sayde by leue and by counseil of' oþere þat' were wyse ¶ And sayde [2212] lordynges the neede for þe which we ben assembled in þis place is a ful heuy þing' and an heigh̄ matiere [2213] by cause of' þe wrong'' and of' þe wikkednesse þat' haþ ben don and eeke by resoun of' þe grete damage /

in tyme comynge ben possible to [1]falle for þis same cause [2214] and eek' by resoun Of' þe grete richesse and power of' þe parties boþe [2215] ¶ ffor þe whiche resouns it' were a gret' *peril*e for to erren in þis matiere // [2216] wherfore melibeus þis is oure sentence we counseile ȝou abouen alle þinges þat' right' anon þou do þi diligence in kepyng' of' þi *pro*pre *per*sone in suche a wyse þat þou ne wante none aspye ne wacche þi body for to saue [2217] ¶ And after þat' we counseile þat þou sette in þin hous suffisaunt' garnysoun ¶ So þat' þey may as wel þy body and þin hous defende [2218] ¶ But' certes for to meve werre ne sodeinly for to do vengeance ¶ We may nouȝt' deme in so litel tyme þat' it' were profitable [2219] wherfore we asken leysir and space to haue deliberacioñ in þis cas to deme [2220] for' þe *com*mune *prou*erbe saiþ þus. he. þat' sone demeþ sone schal repente [2221] ¶ And eek' men say þus þat' þilke Iuge is wys þat' sone vnderstandeþ a matiere and Iugeþ by leysyr [2222] ¶ ffor al be it' so þat' alle taryynge be anoyful: algates it' nys nouȝt' to reproue in ȝeuyng' of Iuggementz ne in vengaunce takynge whanne it' is suffisaunt' and resonable. [2223] and þat' schewed oure lord *ihesus* crist' by ensample ¶ ffor when þat' þe wo*m*man was taken in aduoutrye was brought' in his presens to knowe what' schal ben don with hire *per*sone ¶ Al be it' so þat' he wiste wel himself' what' þat' he wolde answere: ȝit' ne wolde he nouȝt' answere sodeinly but' he wolde haue deliberacioñ and in þe grounde he wrot' twyes [2224] ¶ And by þis cause we axen deliberacioñ And we schullen þanne by þe *gra*ce of' god counseile þe þinge þat' schal be profitable

[2225] ¶ Vp sterte þenne þe ȝonge folk' atones: and þe moste partye of' þat' company haue scorned *þis* olde wise *man* and bygonne to make noyse and sayden [2226] right' so ¶ as whiles þat' yren is hoot men schulden smyte ¶ Right' so men schulden wreken here wronges whiles

þay ben freissche and newe ¶ And with lowde voys þey eryden werre werre

[2227] vp ros þe on of' þe olde wise and with his hande he made a contynaunce þat' þey schulde halden hem stille and ȝiuen hem audience [2228] ¶ lordynges quod he þer is ful many a man þat' crieþ werre werre þat' wot' ful litel what' þat' werre amounteþ [2229] ¶ werre at' his bygynnyng' haþ so gret' an enteryng' and so large ¶ That' eu*e*ry wigh*t*' may entre when him likeþ. and lightly fynde werre [2230] ¶ But' certes to what' ende þat' schal þer-of' bifalle it' nys nouȝt' lightly to knowe [2231] ¶ whan þat' werre is ones bygonne þer is ful many a childe vnborne of' his moder þat' schal sterue ȝong' by cause of' þilke werre Oþer elles lyue in sorwe and deye in wrecchednesse [2232] ¶ And þ*er*fore er þat' eny werre be bygonne men mosten [1]han gret' eounseil and good deliberacioñ [2233] ¶ And when þis olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resoñ wel neiñ alle at' ones bygonne for to ryse for to breken his tale / and beden him fuloften of' his wordes for to abregge [2234] ¶ ffor soþly he þat' precheþ to hem þat' luste nough*t*' his wordes ne his s*er*moñ hem annoyeþ [2235] ¶ ffor Ih*esus* Cirak' saiþ þat' musyke in wepynge is annoyous þing' þus moche is to sayn as moche annoyeþ to speke bifore folk' to whiche his speche annoyeþ: as it' is for to syngen byforn him þat' wepeþ [2236] ¶ And when þis wise man saugh*t* þat' him wantede audience: al schamfast' he sette him doun aȝein. [2237] ffor Salomon seiþ. þer as þou mayst' haue non audience: enforce þe nouȝt' to speke [2238] ¶ I se wel *quod* þis wyse man þat' þe co*m*mune prouerbe is soþ þat' good counseil wanteþ. whan it is most' nede

¶ Ihesus Cirak /

¶ Salomon

[2239] ¶ ȝit' hadde þis Melibeus in his counseill*e* many folk' þat' priuely in his eere counseled him certein þing'. and counseilled him þe contrary in general audience

[2240] ¶ When Melibeus hadde herd þat' þe gretteste

party of' his counseil were acorded þat' he schulde make werre: anon he consentede to here counseilyng ¶ and fully affermed to here sentence [2241] ¶ Thanne dame Prudence whan þat' sche saugh how þat' hire housbonde schope him for to wreke him on his foes and to begynne werre ¶ Sche in ful humble wyse whan sche saugh hire tyme / seyde him in þise wordes [2242] ¶ My lord *quod* sche I ȝou beseche as hertely as I dar and can ¶ Ne haste ȝou nouȝt' to faste ¶ And afore alle guerdouns ȝif' me audience [2243] ¶ ffor Pieres Alphons. saiþ ¶ O who so doþ to þe good oþer harme haste þe nought' to quyten hit ¶ ffor in þis wise þy frend wole abyde and þin enemy schal þe lengere lyue in drede [2244] ¶ The prouerbe saiþ þat' he hasteþ him wel þat' wisly can abyde ¶ and in wicked haste is no *pro*fyte

[2245] ¶ This melybe answerde to his wijf' ¶ ¶ Prudence I *pur*pose nought' *quod* he to werke by þy counseille for many causes and resons ¶ ffor certes eu*e*ry wight' wolde halde me þenne a fool [2246] ¶ This is for to say ¶ If' I for þy counseillyng' wolde chaunge þinges þat' ben ordeynt' and affermed by so many wyse [2247] ¶ Secoundly I say þat' alle wo*m*men ben þikke and none goode of' hem alle ffor of' a þousend men saiþ Salomo*n* I fand a good man But' certes of alle wo*m*men fond I neuer good wo*m*man [2248] ¶ And also *cer*tes if I gouerned me by þy counseil it' schulde seme þat' I hadde ȝoue to þe ouer me þe maystrie ¶ and god forbede þat' it' so were [2249] ¶ ffor Ihe*s*us Cyrak' 'saiþ. þat if' þin wijf' haue maistrie: sche is contrarious to hire housebonde [2250] ¶ and Salomon saiþ ¶ Neuer in þy lyf' to þy wyf' ne to þy childe ne to þy freende ne ȝiue no power ouer þi self' ¶ ffor bettre it' were þat' þin children asken of þy *per*sone þinges þat hem needeþ ¶ þen þou [be] þi self' in þe handes of' þin children [2251] ¶ And also if' I wole wirche by þi counseylyng': certes my counseille moste som tyme be secree til it' were tyme þat' it' moste be

knowe and þis ne may nought be doo [2252. For it is written, 'þe Iangelry of wo*m*men can huyde þinges þat' þey wot' nou3t'' [2253] Furthermore, the philosopher saith, 'in wikked counseil, wo*m*men venquysshe þ men;' and for these reasons I ought not to make use of thy counsel. (*See Prudence's answers to Reasons* 4 *&* 5, *below.*)]

[2254] ¶ When dame Prudence ful debonerly and wiþ alle pacience hadde herde alle þat' hire housbonde liked for to say: Then asked sche of' him licence for to speke and sayde in þis wise [2255] ¶ My lord *quod* sche. as to 3oure ferste resoun it' may lightly ben answerde ¶ ffor I say þat' it' nys foly to chaunge counseille when þe þing' is chaunged Oþer elles when þe þing' semeþ oþer weyes þenne it' semeþ aforn [2256] ¶ And more ouer I say þay þat' 3e haue sworn and behight' to parfourme 3oure emprise [*et tu la laissoies a faire* (Le Ménagier de Paris, i. 193)]. by iuste cause: men schulde nou3t seyn þerfore þat' 3e were a Iyere ne forsworn [2257] ¶ ffor þe book' seiþ þat' þe wise man makeþ no lesynge when he torneþ his corage / to þe bettre [2258] ¶ And if' it' be so þat' 3oure emprise be establissht' and ordeyned by gret' multitude of' folk ¶ 3et' þar þe nought' acomplyse þilke ordynaunce but' 3ou like [2259] ¶ ffor þe trouþe of' þinges and for *pro*fite ben raþer founde. in fewe folk' þat' ben wise / and fulle of' resoñ þen by gret' multitude of' folk' þer eu*e*ry man cryeþ and clatereþ when him likeþ ¶ soþly such multitude nys nought honeste [2260] and as to þe secounde resoñ wher as 3e sayn þat' alle wo*m*men ben wikke: Saue 3oure *grace* ffor certes 3e despyseþ alle wo*m*men in þis wise. and he þat alle despiseþ all dispyseþ as seiþ þe book' [2261] ¶ And Senek' seiþ þat' who so wole haue sapience. schal no man dispreyse ¶ But' he schal gladly teche þe science þat' he can wiþouten *pre*sumpsioun or pryde [2262] and suche þinges þat' he nought' ne can he schal nou3t' be asshamed to lere him) and to enquere of' lasse

folk' þan of' himself' [2263] ¶ And sire þat' þer haþ ben ful many a good wo*m*man may lightly be proued [2264] ¶ certes sire oure lord ihesu crist' nolde neuer han descendet' to be borne of' a wo*m*man if' alle wo*m*men hadde be wicke [2265] ¶ And after þat for þe grete bounte þat' is in wo*m*men oure lord Ihe*sus* when he was rysen fro deþ to lyfe appered raþer to wo*m*man þan to his apostels [2266] ¶ and þoug̃h þat' Salomon saiþ þat' he ne fond neuer wo*m*man good it' [1]folweþ nough̃t þerfore þat alle wo*m*men ben wikke [2267] ¶ For þoug̃h þat' he ne fonde no good wo*m*man Certes many anoþer man haþ founden many a wo*m*man ful good and trewe [2268] Or elles *per*auenture þe entent' of' Salamo*n* was þus þat' as in souereyn bounte he fande no wo*m*man [2269] This is to say þat' þer nys no wigh̃t' þat' haþ *par*fyt' bounte saue god allone as he himself' recordeþ in his euaungelist' [2270] ¶ For þer nys no creature so good that' him ne wanteþ som what/ of' þe *per*feccioñ of' god þat' is his makere [2271] ¶ The þridde resoun is þis 3e say þat' if' 3e gouerne 3ou by my counseil hit' schulde seme þat' 3e hadde 3oue me þe maystry And þe lordschip̃ of' 3oure *per*sone // [2272] Sire saue 3oure *grace* hit nys nough̃t so ¶ For if' so were þat no man schulde be counseled but' oonly of' hem þat' hadde lorschipe and maystrye of' his *per*sone men nolde nough̃t be counseiled so ofte. [2273] For soþly þilke men þat' askeþ counseil of' a purpos ¶ 3et' haþ he free wille wheþer he wol do after þat' counsel or no [2274] ¶ And as to 3oure fourþe resoñ þer as 3e sayn þat' þe Iangelry of wo*m*men can huyde þinges þat' þey wot' nou3t' ¶ As who saiþ þat' a wo*m*man can nough̃t' huyde what' sche wot' [2275] ¶ Sire þese wordes ben vnderstonde of' wo*m*men þat' ben Iangleresses and wicked [2276] of' whiche wo*m*men men sayn þat' þre þinges dryueþ a man out' of' his hous. That' is to say Smoke droppyng' of' Rayn and wickidde wyfes [2277] And

swiche wommen saiþ Salamon þat he were bettre to dwelle in desert þan with a womman þat is ryetous [2278] And sire by 3oure leue þat am nought I [2279] ¶ For 3e haue ful ofte assayed my grete Cilence and my grete pacience and eek how wel þat he can huyde and hele þinges þat men oughten secrely to huyden [2280] ¶ and soþ as to 3oure fifte resoñ wher as 3e say þat in wikked counseil wommen venquysshe þ men ¶ God wot þilke resoñ stant heere in no stede [2281] ¶ For vnderstandeth now 3e axeth counseil for to do wikkednes [2282] and if 3e wolen werke wikkednesse and 3oure wijf restreyneþ þilke wikked purpos and ouercome 3ou by resoñ and by good counseil [2283] certes 3oure wyf oughte raþer to be preysed þen to be blamed [2284] ¶ This scholde 3e vnderstande þe philosophre þat saiþ In wicked counseil wommen venquysshen here housebondes [2285] ¶ and þere as 3e blamen alle wommen & here resoñs I schal schewe 3ou by many ensamples þat many wommen han ben ful goode and 3et ben and here counsel holsome and profitable [2286] ¶ eeke some men han sayde þat þe counselyng of wommen is eyþer to deere or elles to lytel of pris [2287] ¶ But al be it so þat ful many womman is badde and here counseil vile & nou3t worþ 3et han men founde many a good womman and ful discret and wys in counselyng // [2288] lo Iacob þurgh þe goode counseil of his moder Rebekka wan þe benysoñ of his fader and þe lordschipe ouer alle his breþeren. [2289] Iudith þurgh hire goode counseil delyuered þe Cite of Buphelye in which sche dwelte out of þe lande of Olyuerne þat hadde it al byseged and wolde han al destruyet it [2290] ¶ Abegayle delyuered Nabal hir housbonde fro Dauid þe king þat wolde han slayn him and appaysede þe yre of þe king by hire witte and by hire goode counseilyng [2291] ¶¶ Ester by hire counceil enchaunced gretly þe poeple of god in þe Regne of Assueres þe king [2292] and þe same bounte. in good counseiling of

many a wo*m*man may men telle [2293] ¶ And furþ*er*more whan þat' oure lord had created Ad*a*m oure forme fader: he sayde in þis wise / [2294] It' nys nought' good to be a man allone ¶ Make we an helper semblable to himself. [2295] ¶ Here may ȝe see þat' if þat' wo*m*man were nouȝt' good and hire counseil good and p*r*ofytable: [2296] Oure lord god of' heuene ne wolde neuer han y-wrouȝt' hem ne called hem þe helper of' man [. . . . . *no gap.*] [2297] ¶ And þer sayde ones a clerk' in tuo vers / what' is bettre þan a good Iaspre [. . . . . . . *no gap.*] wisdom [2298] And what' is bettre þan wisdam wo*m*man and what' is bettre þan wo*m*man þat' is a good wo*m*man no þing' [2299] ¶ And sire by many of' oþer resoñs may ȝe seen þat' many wo*m*men ben goode and eek' here cou*n*seil good and profitable [2300] ¶ And þerfore sire if' ȝe wiln truste to my counseil: I schal restore ȝou ȝoure doughter hool and sound [2301] ¶ And eek' þat' I wol to ȝou don so moche þat' ȝe schuln haue honour in þis caas

[2302] ¶ When melybe had herde þe wordes of' his wijf' Prudence: he sayde þus [2303] þat' þe wordes of' Salamon is soþ ¶ For he saiþ þat' wordes þat' ben' spoken discretly by ordynau*n*ce ben hony combes ffor þey ȝiuen swetnesse to þe soule and holsomnes to þe body [2304] ¶ And wyf' by cause of' þine swete wordes and eeke for I haue y-proued and sayd þin grete sapience and þin grete trouþe I wol gouerne me by þyn counseyl in alle þing'

[2305] ¶ Now sire q*uod* dame Prudence and seþenes ȝe fouche sauf' to be gouerned by my counseil: I wol enforme ȝou how þat' ȝe schuln gouerne ȝoure self' in chesyng' of' ȝoure counseilo*urs* [2306] ¶ ȝe schuln ferst' fourme alle ȝoure wekes mekely byseken to þe hihe god þat' he wol ben ȝour counseilour [2307] And schapeþ ȝou to such entent' þat' he ȝiue ȝou counseil and confort as taughte Thobye [1] to his sone [2308] at alle tymes. thou schalt/ blesse

god and preyen him to dresse / þine weyes. and loke also þat þine counseiles ben in him for euermore [2309] ¶ Seint Iame saiþ ¶ If any of 3ou haue neede of Sapience: aske it of god [2310] ¶ And afterward þenne schullen 3e take counsel in 3oure self and examyn wel 3oure owne þou3tes of swiche þinges as 3ou þenkeþ þat is best for 3oure profyt [2311] ¶ And þenne schulle 3e dryue fro 3oure hertes þinges þat ben contrarious to good counseil [2312] þat is to say. Ire. Coueytise. and hastynes.

[2313] ffirst he þat askeþ counseil of himself: certes he moste be wiþouten Ire [. . . . . [2314] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] and wraþþe in himself he weneþ alwey þat he may do þing þat he may not do [2315] ¶ And secoundly he þat is Irous and wroþ he [. . . . . [2316] *no gap in the MS.*] may nought wel counseille [2317] ¶ The þridde is þis. þat he þat is Irous and wroþ as saiþ Senek ne may nought speke but blameful þinges [2318] And with þilke vicious wordes he stereþ oþer folk to anger and to Ire [2319] And eek sire 3e moste drede coueytise out of 3oure herte. [2320] ffor þe apostel seiþ þat coueytise is þe roote of alle harmes. [2321] And trusteth right wel þat a coueytous man ne can nought deme ne þenke but only to fulfille þe ende of his coueytise. [2322] and certes þat ne may neuer be acomplised. ffor euer þe more habundance þat he haþ of richesse: þe more he desireþ [2323] ¶ And sire 3e moste also driue out of 3*our* hertes hastynes [2324] ¶ For certes 3e may nou3t deme for þe beste a sodeyn þought þat falleþ in 3oure herte ¶ But 3e moste avise 3ou on hit ful ofte [2325] ¶ ffor as 3e haue herd here biforn þe comune *pro*verbe is þis That he þat sone demeþ sone repenteþ //

[2326] Sire 3e ne be nou3t alwey in ylike disposicioñ [2327] ffor certes som þing þat some tyme semeþ to 3ou þat is good for to do. Anoþer tyme it semeþ to 3ou þe cont*rar*ie. *[A great bit is now omitted in Corpus.]*

[Laud MS 600, leaf 233]

[2328] [When ye han taken counseile in your self And han demed bi good deliberacion siche þing as you semiþ best [2329] ¶ þanne rede I / you that ye kepe it secre / [2330] bewrie not your counseile to no persone. bot it so be. þat ye wene sikerli þat þurgh your bewrieng / your condicion shal be to you þe more profitable [2331] ¶ For Ihesus Sirac saiþ ¶ Neiþer to þi foo ne to þi frende. discouer not þi secre ne þi foli. [2332] for þai wol yeue you audience and loking and supportacioñ in þi presence and scorne in þi absence. [2333] ¶ Anoþer clerc saiþ þat scarsli shalt þou finde any persone þat mai kepe counseil secreli: [2334] ¶ The book saiþ while þou kepest þi counsail in þin hert þou kepist it in þi prison / [2335] and whan þou bewriest þi counsaile to any wigħt / he holdeþ þe in his snare./ [2336] And þerfore you is better hide your counsaile. in your hert / þan praien him to whom ye haue bewried your counseil þat he wol kepe it clos and stille. [2337] ¶ For Seneca saiþ if so be. þat þou ne maist not. þin owne counseile hide. How darst þou praien any oþer wigħt / þi counseil secreli to kepe. [2338] ¶ Bot naþeles if þou wene sicurli / þat þi bewriyngꝫ of þi counsaile to a persone wol make þi condicion to stonde in a better plite. Then shalt þou tellen him þi counseil in þis wise [2339] ¶ First þou shalt make no semblant / where þe were leuer werre or pees. or þis. or þat. ne shew him not þi wille / and þin entent [2340] ¶ For trust wel þat comunli þise counseilours. ben flaterers And [2341] namely þe counseillours of grete lordes. [2342] for þei enforcen hem alwei. raþèr to speke plesant wordes. enclynyng to þe lordes lust þan wordes þat ben trewe. and profitable. [2343][1] ¶ And þerfore men sai þat þe riche man haþ selden good counsaile / bot he haue it of himself [2344] ¶ And aftir þat þou shalt considre þi frendes and þi enemyes ./ [2345] And as touching þi frendes. þou shalt con-

nota

[1 Laud MS, leaf 233, back]

sidre whiche of hem beth most faiþful and most wise. and eldest and most approued in counseilyng [2346] and of hem shalt þou axe þi counsaile as þe caas requireth [Laud MS 600]

[2347] ¶ I / sai þat first ye shul clepe to youre counsaile / youre frendes þat ben trewe./ [2348] For Salamon saiþ / for right as þe hert of a man delitiþ in sauour. þat is soote / right so þe counsaile of your trewe frendes / yeueþ swetnes to þe soule [2349] ¶ He saiþ also þer mai noþing be likned to þe trewe frende / [2350] ¶ For certes gold ne siluer be not so moche worþ. as þe good wille of a trewe frende / [2351] and eke he saiþ þat a trewe frende. is a stronge defence / who þat it findeþ. certis he findeþ a gret tresour [2352] ¶ þene shul ye eke considre / if þat youre trewe frendes ben discrete and wise / for þe book saiþ. axe þi counsaile alwai of hem þat ben wise. [2353] And bi þis same resoun. shul ye clepe to youre counsaile of youre frendes þat ben age. siche as haue sai sightes and ben expert in mony þinges. and ben approued in counseiling. [2354] for þe book saiþ þat in olde men is þe sapience. and in longe time þe prudence [2355] ¶ And tullius saiþ þat grete þinges ben not aye accompleed bi strengþe ne bi delyuernes of bodi. bot bi good counsail. bi auctorite of persones and bi science. þe whiche þre þinges ben not feble bi age./ bot certes þai enforcen to encresen dai by dai. [2356] and þan shul ye kepe þis for a general rewle ¶ First shul ye clepe to youre counsaile a fewe of your frendes þat ben especial [2357] ¶ For Salamon saiþ mony frendes haue þou. bot among a þousand chese þe on to be þi conseillour / [2358] For al be it so þat þou first ne telle þi counseil bot to a fewe. þou maist aftirward telle it to moo folk / if it be nede. [2359] bot loke alwey þat þi counseilours haue þi[l]k þre condiciouns. þat I / haue said

[Laud MS] before. þat is to sai þat þei be trewe and olde. and of wis experience. [2360] ¶ And wirke not alwey in euery nede / bi on counseilour allone. For somtyme behoueþ it be counseilid bi many. [2361] ¶ For Salamon saiþ. Saluacion of þinges is. where as þer ben many counselers.] [Laud MS extract ends]

[Corpus MS, on leaf 221, back] [2362] Now haue I tolde 3ou of' which folk' 3e scholde be counseled NOw wol I teche 3ou which counseil 3e owe to eschewe [2363] fferst' 3e schuln eschewe þe counseilyng' of' fooles. Salomon saiþ take no counseil of' a fool ffor he wol counseile but' after his owne luste and his affectiõs [2364] ¶ The book/ saiþ þat' þe proprete of' a fool is þis ¶ he troweþ lightly harme of' euery wigħt' and lightly troweþ a bounte in himself' [2365] ¶ Thou schalt' eke eschewe þe counseiling' of' alle flaterers whiche enforcen hem raþer to preysen 3oure persone by flaterye þan for to telle 3ou þe soþfastnesse of' þinges

[2366] ¶ Wherfore Tullius saiþ among' alle þe pestilence [1]þat ben in frendschipe þe grettest' is flaterie ¶ And perfore is it' more nede þat' þou eschewe and drede flaterers þan any oþer poeple / [2367] The book' saiþ þou schalt' raþer [drede and] fle fro þe swete wordes of' flaterynge & preysyng' þen fro þe egre wordes of' þy frend þat' saiþ þe. þin soþes [2368] Salomon saiþ þat' þe wordes of' a flaterer is a snare to cacche Innocence [2369] ¶ he saiþ also. he þat' spekeþ to his frend wordes of' swetnes and of' plesañce: setteþ a nette biforn his fect' to cacche him [2370] ¶ And þerfore Tullius saiþ Enclyne nou3t' þin eeres to flaterers Ne take no counseil of' wordes of' flaterie -/ [2371] and Catoñ saiþ ¶ Avise þe wel and eschęwe þe wordes of' swetnes and of' plesaunce [2372] ¶ And eek' þou schalt' eschewe þe counsellyng' of' þine olde enemys þat' be reconsiled [2373] The book' saiþ þat' no wigħt' retourneþ saufly in to þe

grace of his olde enemy [2374] ¶ And Isope saiþ ¶ Ne truste nouȝt to hem to whiche som tyme þou hast had werre / or enmyte ne telle hem nouȝt þi counseille [2375] ¶ And Senek telleþ þe cause why it may noughȝt be saith he þat where long tyme fuyr haþ endured þat þer dwelleþ som tyme vapour of hete [2376] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salamon in þin olde foo truste þou neuere [2377] ffor sikerly þoughȝ þin enemy be reconsiled and makeþ þe chere of humilite and lowteþ to þe wiþ his heed ne truste him neuere [2378] ffor certes he makeþ þilke feyned humilite more for his profyt þan for eny humilite or for eny loue of þin persone by [. . . . . *no gap*] such feyned contynance The which victory he mighȝt haue by stryf or werre [2379] And Petre Alfouns saiþ. make no felaschipe wiþ þine olde enemyes ffor if þou do hem bounte þey wollen peruerten hit to wickednesse [2380] And eeke þou most eschewe þe counseilyng of hem þat ben þin seruañtz and beren the gret reuerence ffor perauenture þey seyn it more for drede þan for loue [2381] ¶ And þerfore saiþ a Philosophre in þis wise ¶ Ther nys no wighȝt parfytly trewe to him þat he to sore dredeþ [2382] ¶ And Tullius saiþ ¶ Ther nys no wighȝt so gret of eny emperour þat longe may endure / but if he haue loue of þe poeple and drede [2383] ¶ Thow schalt eschewe also þe counseiling of folk þat ben drunkelewe for þey ne can no counselle huyde. [2384] Salamon saiþ þer nys no pryuyte þer as regneþ drunkenes [2385] ¶ ȝe schullen han also in suspecte to þe counseling of such folk as counseile ȝow a þing priuily and counseile ȝou a þing þat is contrarie openly · [2386] ffor Cassidory saiþ þat it is a maner sleighte to hyndre his enemy when [1]he scheweþ to don a þing openly and werkeþ priuily þe contrarie [2387] ¶ Thou schalt haue also in þin suspecte þe cõselynge of wikked folk [. . . . . *no gap*] þat is alwey ful

of fraude [2388] and Dauid saiþ þat blisful is þe man þat haþ nought folwed þe counseling of schrewes [2389] ¶ Thow schalt also eschewe þe counseilling of 3ong folk ffor here counseilyng nys nought rype as Salomon saiþ

[2390] ¶ Now sire siþenes I haue schewed 3ou of which folk 3e schuln take counsel and of which folk 3e schuln folwe þe counsel / [2391] Now wol I teche 3ou how 3e schuln examyn 3oure counsel after the doctrine of Tullius [2392] in þe examynyng þenne of 3oure counseilour 3e schuln considere many þinges [2393] ¶ Alþer first þou schalt considere þilke þing þat þou purposest and vpon what þing þou wolt han counseil þat verray trouþe be sayde and conserued þis is to say telle trewly þin tale [2394] ¶ For he þat saiþ fals may [not] wel be counseiled in þat caas of which [he lyeth] [2395] ¶ And after þis þou schalt consideren þe þinges þat acorden to þat þou purposest for to be by þin counseilours if resoñ acordeþ þerto [2396] ¶ And eek if þi mi3t may atteyne þerto ¶ And if þe more part and þe bettre part of 3oure counseilours acorden þerto or no. [2397] þen schalt þou considere what þing schal folwe of here counseilinge. as hate pees werre grace profyt other damage and many oþer þinges [2398] And in alle þinges þou schalt chese þe beste and weyfe alle oþer þinges [2399] ¶ Thenne schalt þou considere of what roote it is engendred þe matier of þin counseil and what fruyt it may conceyue and engendre [2400] þou schalt eek considre alle þese causes for þe whiche þey ben sprongе [2401] ¶ and whan 3e haue examyned 3oure counseil as I haue sayde and which partie is þe bettre and more profitable and hast aproued it by many wise folk and olde [2402] þanne schalt þou considere if þou mayst performe hit and make of hit a good ende [2403] ¶ For certes resoñ wol nou3t þat any man schal begynne a þing but if he mighte performe hit as him ow3te [2404] ¶ Ne no wight schulde

taken vpon him so heuy a charge þat he mighte [not] bere it [2405] ¶ For þe prouerbe saiþ he þat to mochel enbraceþ distreyneþ litel [2406] ¶ And Catoñ saiþ ¶ Assay such þing as þou hast power to done leste þe charge oppresse þe to sore þat þe bihoueþ to weyue þing þat þou hast bygonne [2407] ¶ And if so be þat þou be in doute. wher þou maist *per*forme a þing or non: chese raþer for to suffre þan for to bygynne [2408] ¶ And Pieres alphouns saith If þou hast mighte to don a þing of which þou most repente it is bettre [. . . . . [2409] . . . . . *no gap*] halde þi tunge [1]stille þan for to speke [2410] ¶ Then may I vnderstonde by strenger resouns þat if þou hast power to *per*forme a werk of which þou schalt repente þe ¶ Thenne is it bettre þat þou suffre þan bygynne [2411] wel seyn þey þat defenden eu*e*ry wighte to assaye a þing of which he is in doute wher he may *per*forme it or non [2412] ¶ And *after* when ȝe haue examynd ȝoure coñseiH as I haue sayd biforn and knowe wel þat ȝe may *per*forme ȝoure emprise: conferme it þenne sadly til it be at an ende

[2413] ¶ Now is it reson and tyme þat I schewe ȝou whenne and where-fore þat ȝe may chaunge ȝoure counsel*ours* wiþouten ȝoure reprofe [2414] ¶ Soþly man may chaunge his purpos and his counseiH if þe cause cesseth or whan a newe cause betydeþ [2415] ¶ For þe lawe seiþ vpon þinges þat newely betyden bihoueþ newe coñseiH [2416] ¶ And Senek saiþ ¶ If þin counseil come to þe eeres of þin enemys: chaunge þi coñseiH [2417] [*Après, l'en peut changier son conseil*] if so be þou fynde þat by errour or by ony oþer cause harme or damage may betyde [2418] ¶ Also of þin counsel be dishoneste oþer elles come of dishoneste cause: chaunge þin counsel [2419] ¶ For þe lawe saiþ/ þat alle bihestes þat ben dishoneste ne ben of no value:

[2420] and eek' if' so be þat' it be impossible oþer may nouȝt' gladly be performed oþer kepte

[2421] And take þis for a general reule / þat euery counsel þat' is enformed so strongly þat' it' may nought' be chaunged for no condicioñ þat' may betyde: I say þat' ilke coñsel is wicked.

[2422] ¶ Melibeus whan he hadde herd þe doctrine of' his wijf' dame prudence: he answerde in þis wyse. [2423] Dame quod he as ȝet' vnto þis tyme ȝe han wel taught' me as in generalle how I schal gouerne me and in þe chesyng' and in þe wiþholdyng' of my counsellours. [2424] But' now wolde I fayn þat' ȝe wolde condescende in special [2425] and telle me how þat' likeþ ȝou or how þat' semeþ ȝou by oure counsellours þat' we haue chose in þis present' neede

[2426] ¶ My lord quod sche I beseche ȝou in al humbles þat' ȝe wolde nought' wilfully reproeuen aȝein myn resoñs ne distempre ȝoure herte þough I speke þing' þat' ȝou displese [2427] ¶ ffor god woot' as in myn entent' I speke it' as for þe beste for ȝoure honour and for ȝour profyt' eeke [2428] ¶ And soþly I hope þat' ȝoure benignite wol take it' in pacience [2429] ¶ and trusteþ to me wel þat' ȝoure counsel in þis cas ne scholde nouȝt' as to speke proprely be called a counselynge but' a mocioun or a meuyng' of' folye [2430] In which counseil ȝe haue herde in many a sondry wise

[2431] ¶ ffirst' and forþward ȝe han herd in þe assemblyng' of' ȝour counsellours [2432] ¶ ffor first' ȝe schulde haue cleped [1]a fewe folk' to ȝoure counseille ¶ And after þat' ȝe might' haue schewed it' to mo folk' if' it' hadde be neede. [2433] But' certes sodeinly ȝe han cleped to ȝoure counseil a gret' multitude of' poeple fulle chargaunt' and ful annuyous for to heere [2434] ¶ And also ȝe haue herde furthere as ȝe schulde only haue cleped to ȝoure counselle ȝoure trewe frendes olde & wise [2435] ¶ ȝe han cleped also straunge folk' ȝong' folk' fals flaterers and enemys

reconsiled and folk' þat don 3ou• reuerence wiþouten loue / [2436] and eek' also 3e haue herd for 3e han brought wiþ 3ou to 3oure counseil. Ire. coueytise and hastines [2437] þe whiche þre þinges ben contrary to eue*ry* good counseil and honest' & profitable [2438] þe whiche þre þinges 3e han nou3t' anyntesched o*þer* destruyed hem ney*þer* in 3oure self' ne in 3oure / counceillours as 3e aughte [2439] ¶ 3e han herde also for 3e han schewed to 3oure counseillours 3oure talent' 3oure affeccioñ to make werre anon for to do vengeaunce [2440] And þey haue aspied by 3oure wordes to what' þing' 3e ben enclyned [2441] ¶ and þ*er*fore haue þey ra*þer* counseled 3ou to 3oure talent' þan to 3oure p*rofyt'* [2442] 3e han herde also for semeþ it / sufficeþ to han ben counceled by þis counceillou*rs* oonly and wiþ litel auyse [2443] where as in so grete and in so heih a neede it' haþ be necessarye mo counselou*rs* and mo deliberacioñs to parforme 3oure emprise [2444] ¶ 3e han herd also for 3e han herd nought' 3oure counsel in þe forseyde manere ne in dewe man*ere* as þe cas requyreþ [2445] ¶ 3e haue herd also for 3e haue maad no dyuysioñ betwixe [. . . . . *no gap*] 3oure trewe frendes and 3oure feyned coñcelou*rs* [2446] ¶ Ne 3e haue nou3t' knowe þe wille of' 3oure trewe freendes olde and wise. [2447] but' 3e haue cast' alle here wordes in an hoche potte and enclyned 3oure herte to þe more part' and to þe grettere nombre [. . . . . [2448] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] of fooles þenne of' wise men. [2449] ¶ And þ*er*fore þe counselynge þat' ben at congregacioñs and multitudes of' folk' þ*er* as men take more reward to þe nombre þen to Sapience of p*er*sones: [2450] 3e seen wel þat in suche councelynges fooles haue þe maystrie [2451] ¶ Melybe answerde and sayde a3ein I g*r*aunte wel þat' I haue herd [2452] ¶ But' þ*er* as þou hast' tolde me þ*er* biforn þat' he nys nought' to blame þat chaungeþ his coun-

ceiloures for certein caas and for certein and iuste cause [2453] I am al redy to chaunge myne counceilours right as þou woldest deuyse [2454] ¶ ffor þe prouerbe saith þat for to don synne is mannysscħ But certes for to perseueren longe in synne is werkes of þe deuel.

[2455] [1]To þis sentence answered anon dame Prudence and sayde. [2456] examyneþ *quod* sche 3oure coñselle and let vs se þe which of hem haþ spoke more resonably and taught 3ou best coñseil [2457] ¶ And for as moche as þat examinacion is necessary. let vs begynne at surgiens and at phisiciens þat first spaken of þis matiere [2458] ¶ I say þat Phisiciens & surgiens haue sayd 3ou in 3oure coñsel discretly as hem ought [2459] & in here speche sethens ful wisly þat to þe office of hem apperteyneþ to don to euery wight honour and profyt and nou3t for to ennoye [2460] and after here crafte to don gret diligence vnto þe cure of hem whiche þat þey haue in here gouernaunce [2461] and sir right as þey han answered wisly and discretly: [2462] Right so rede I þat þey ben heighly and souereynly guerdount for here noble speche [2463] and eek for þey schullen more do þe ententyf busynes in þe curacioñ of þin doughter deere [2464] ¶ ffor al be it so þat þei ben 3oure freendes: þerfore schuln 3e nou3t suffre þat þey serue 3ou for nought [2465] ¶ But 3e aught þer after guerdoñ hem and payen hem here largesse [2466] ¶ and as touchynge þe proporcioñ which þat þe phisiciens encreseden in þis caas ¶ This is to sayn [2467] þat in maladyes is þat a contrary is warisshed by anoþer contrarie [2468] ¶ I wolde fayn knowe how 3e vnderstode þilke text and what is 3oure sentence [2469] ¶ Certes *quod* Melibeus I vnderstande it in þis wise. [2470] Right as þey haue done me a contrary: so schuld I don hem anoþer [2471] ¶ ffor right as þey haue venged hem vpon me: and don me wrong: Right so wol I venge me vpon hem

and don hem wrong' [2472] and þenne haue I cured a contrary by anoþer

[2473] ¶ lo lo *quod* dame prudence how lightly is eu*er*y man enclyned to his owne desir to his plesaunce [2474] ¶ Certes *quod* sche þe wordes of' þe phisicien ne schulde nou3t' be vnderstande in þat' wise [2475] ffor certes wikkednesse is nou3t' cont*rar*y to wickednes ne vengeance is nou3t' contrary to vengaunce ne wrong' to wrong' [*mais sont semblables*. [2476] *Et pour ce, vengence par vengence, ne injure par injure, n'est pas curé* (Men. i. 206-7)] [2477] But' eu*er*y of' hem encreseþ and engreggeþ o*þer* [2478] ¶ But' certes þe wordes of' þe phisicien schullen ben vnderstonde in þis wise [2479] ¶ ffor good and wickednesse ben tuo- cont*rar*ious ¶ And pees and werre vengeañce and sufferañce discord and acord and many oþer þinges [2480] ¶ But' certes wickednesse schal ben y-warisched by goodnes. discord by acord. werre by pees and so forþ and oþer þinges [2481] ¶ And herto acordeþ seint' Poule þe appostel and in many place [2482] he saiþ ¶ Ne 3eldeþ nou3t' harm for [1] harm ne wicked speche [*pour mesdit*] [2483] But' do wel to hem þat' don þe harme and blesse hem þat' saiþ to þe harme [2484] And many oþer places he amonysscheþ pees and acord [2485] ¶ But' now wol I speke of' þe counseil which was y-3oue vnto 3ou by men of' lawe þe wise folk' and olde folk' [2486] þat' sayden alle by on acorde as 3e haue herde biforn [2487] ¶ That' ou*er* alle þinges 3e schullen don 3oure diligence to kepe 3oure *per*sone and to warmstore 3oure hous [2488] ¶ And þay sayden also þat' in þis caas 3e oughten to wirchen ful avisily and wiþ gret' deliberacioñ [2489] ¶ And *sir* as to þe first poynt' þat' toucheþ vnto þe kepyng' of' 3oure *per*sone [2490] 3e schullen vnd*er*stande þat' he þat' haþ werre schal euermore deuoutely and mekely preyen biforn alle þinges [2491] þat' Ih*esus* crist' of' his m*er*cy wole

haue him in his *pro*teccioñ and ben his souerein helpynge at' his neede [2492] ffor certes in þis world nys no wigħt' þat' may be counseled ne kepte sufficiauntly wiþouten þe kepyng' of' oure lord ih*esus* crist' [2493] To þis sentence accordeþ þe *pro*phete dauid þat' saiþ. [2494] If' god ne kepe þe cite in ydel wakeþ he þat' it' kepeþ [2495] ¶ Now *sir* þenne schulle ȝe quyte þe kepyng' of' ȝoure *per*sone to ȝoure trewe frendes þat' ben ap*pro*ved and y-knowe [2496] and of' hem schuln ȝe asken helpe ȝoure *per*sone for to kepe ¶ ffor Catoñ saiþ ¶ If' þou hast' neede of helpe: aske it' of' þin frendes [2497] ffor þer nys non so good a phisicien as þin trewe freend [2498] and af*ter* þis þenne schulle ȝe kepe ȝou fro alle st*ra*unge folk' and fro lyeres And haue alway in suspecte here companye [2499] ¶ ffor pieres alphouns saiþ ¶ Ne take no companye by þe way of' st*ra*unge man but it so be þou haue knowe him of' lengere tyme. [2500] and if' so be þat' he falle in to þin company *per*aduenture wiþouten þin assent' [2501] enquere þenne as subtilly as þou canst' of' his conu*er*sacioñ and of' his lyf' byfore and feyne þy way seynge þou woldest' go þider as þou woldest' nouȝt go. [2502] and if' he bereþ a spere holde þe on þe rigħt' syde of' him. and if' he bereþ a swerde holde þe on þe left' syde of' him. [2503] and þenne schul ȝe kepe ȝou wisly fro alle such manere of' poeple as I haue sayde ȝou here bifore and hem and here counsel eschewe [2504] And after þis þenne schulle ȝe kepe ȝou in such man*ere* [2505] þat' for any *pre*sumpcioun of' ȝoure bodily strengþe þat' ȝe ne dispise nougħt' ne accounte nouȝt þe might' of' ȝoure adu*er*sary so lyte þat' ȝe lete þe kepynge of' ȝoure *per*sone for ȝoure *pre*sumpcioñ [2506] ffor eu*er*y wysman dredeþ his enemy [2507] ¶ And Salamon saiþ wel fool is he þat' of' al haþ drede [2508] ¶ ffor [1] certes he þat' þurgħ hardynesse of' his herte and þurgħ þe hardynes of' hi*m*self' haþ so gret' *pre*sumpcioñ him schal yuele betyde [2509] ¶ Thenne

schuln ȝe euermore encountrewayte enbusschementȝ and alle espyaile. [2510] ffor as saiþ þe wise man [. . . . . : *no gap in the MS.*] [2511] he ne falleþ in to no periles þat periles escheweþ [2512] ¶ And al be it/ so þat þou seme þat þou be in secre place ȝet schalt þou alwey don diligence in the kepynge of þin persone [2513] þis is to say. Ne be nouȝt necligent to kepe þin persone nought only fro þin grettest enemy. but only fro þin leste enemy [2514] Senek saiþ a man þat is wel auysed he dredeþ his leste enemy [2515] Ovide seiþ þat þe lytel wesel wol sle þe grete bole and þe wilde hert [2516] And þe prouerbe saiþ þat a luytel þorne may greeue a king ful sore ¶ And a litel hound wol holde þe wilde bore [2517] ¶ But naþeles I say nought þou schalt be so coward þat þou doute wher as is no drede [2518] ¶ The bok saiþ that some men haue gret lust to disceyue but ȝit þey drede to be desceyued [2519] [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] And kepe þe fro þe company of Scorners [2520] ¶ ffor þe book saiþ þat scorners ne makeþ no companye but flee here word as venym

[2521] ¶ Now as to þe secounde poynt where as ȝoure wise counceilours counseiled ȝou to warmstore ȝoure houses wiþ gret diligence [2522] ¶ I wolde fayn knowe how þat ȝe vnderstande þilke wordes and what is ȝoure sentence.

[2523] Mellibeus answerde and sayde Certes I vnderstande in þis wise þat I schal warmstore myn hous wiþ toures suche as haue castelles and oþer maner of edifices & armure and archers [2524] betwen which þing if I may my persone and myn hous so kepe and defende þat myn enemys schuln be in drede myn hous for to approche.

[2525] to þis sentence answerde anon prudence warnysshing *quod* sche of heihe toures and of heihe edifices appertyneþ somtyme to pryde [2526] And eek men make heihe toures [*et les grans édifices à grant travail et à grans*

despens, et quant elles sont faites, elles ne vallent riens se elles ne sont defendues par sages et par bons amis loyaux, et à grans missions (Le Ménagier, i. 209)] [2527] ¶ And vnderstande wel þat' þe grettest' and þe strengest' garnysoñ þat' riche man may haue / as wel to kepen his persone and his goodes is [2528] þat' he [be] biloued wiþ his subiectes and with his neihebours [2529] ¶ ffor þus saiþ Tullius That' þer is a maner garnysoñ þat' no man may venquysschen ne discomfite and þat' is [2530] a lord to be loued of' his citeȝeins and of' his poeple

¶ Tullius

[2531] ¶ Now sire as to þe þridde poynt' where as ȝoure olde and wise counseiloures sayden ¶ þat' ȝou ne oughte nouȝt' sodeinly ne hastely proceden in þis neede [2532] But' þat' ȝe oughten purueyen and apparayle ȝou in þis caas wiþ gret' diligence and with gret' deliberacioñ [2533] ¶ Trewely I trowe þat' þay sayden right' wisly and right' soþ [2534] ¶ ffor Tullius saiþ In euery neede er þou begynne it apparayle þe with gret' diligence. [2535] þenne say I þat in vengaunce takyng' in werre in [1] bataille and in warnestoringe [2536] er þou bygynne ¶ I rede þat þou apparayle þe þer to ¶ And do it' wiþ gret' deliberacioñ [2537] ¶ ffor Tullius saiþ, þat' lange apparaylinge biforn þe bataile makeþ schort' victory [2538] ¶ And Cassidorus saiþ þe garnysoñ is strenger whan it' is long' tyme avised

¶ Tullius.

¶ Cassidorus

[2539] But' now lete vs speke of' þe counseil þat' was acorded by oure neyheboures suche as don ȝou reuerence wiþouten loue [2540] ȝoure olde enemys reconsiled ¶ ȝoure flaterers [2541] þat' counceleden ȝou certeyn þinges priuely and openly counseileden ȝou þe contrarie [2542] ¶ The ȝonge folk' also þat' counseiled ȝou to vengen ȝou and to maken werre anon. [2543] ¶ And certes sire as I haue sayde byforn: ȝe haue gretly y-erred to han y-cleped suche maner of' folk' to ȝoure counselle [2544] ¶ Whiche counseiloures / ben ynough reproued by þe resoñs aforn sayde [2545] ¶ But' naþeles let' vs now descende to

þe special 3e schuln ferst' proceden after þe doctrine of' Tullius [2546] ¶ Certes the trouþe of' þis matier eyþer of' þis counseil neded not' diligently enqueren [2547] ¶ ffor it' is wel wiste whiche þey ben þat' doon 3ou þis trespas & vilenye [2548] and how many trespasoures and in what' manere þey han don to 3ou al þis wronge and alle þis vilanye [2549] ¶ And after þis þanne schullen 3e examine 3e secounde condicion̄ þe which þat' Tullius addeth in þis matiere [2550] ¶ ffor Tullius putteþ a þing' which þat' he cleþeþ consentynge þis is to say [2551] who ben þay and whiche ben þay and how many þat' consenten to þin counseil in þin willefulnesse to don hasty vengeance [2552] ¶ And let' vs concidre also who ben þay and how many ben þay [. . . . . *no gap*] þat' consenten to 3oure aduersaries [2553] And certes as to þe ferste poynt ¶ hit' is wel knowen whiche ben þay þat' consenten to oure hastyf' wilfulnesse [2554] ¶ ffor trewely alle þo þat' counselen 3ou to maken sodeyn werre ne ben̄ nought' 3oure frendes [2555] ¶ let' se now whiche ben þey þat' 3e holden so gretly 3oure frendes as to 3oure persone [2556] ¶ ffor al be it' so þat' 3e ben mighty and ryche: certes 3e ben but' allone [2557] ¶ ffor certes 3e ne han no childe but' a doughter [2558] ne 3e han no breþeren ne cosyns germayns ne non oþer neih kynrede [2559] ¶ Wherfore 3oure enemys scholden stinte to plede wiþ 3ou ne to' destruye 3oure persone. [2560] 3e knowen also þat' 3oure richesse moot' ben dispended in diuerse partyes [2561] & when þat' euery wight' haþ his parte: þey woln take but' litel rewarde to vengen þy deþ [2562] ¶ But' þin enemys ben þre and þey haue many children breþeren cosyns and oþer neyh kynrede [2563] ¶ And þough̄ so were þat' þou haddest' slayn of' hem two oþer .iij. 3et' dwellen þere ynowe to [1]awreken here deþ and to slen þin persone [2564] ¶ And þeih so be þat' 3oure kynrede be more siker and stedefast' þen

þe kyn of· 3oure adu*er*sary [2565] ¶ 3et· neuer þe les 3oure kynrede is but· after kynrede þey ben but· litel sibbe to 3ou [2566] ¶ And þe kyn of· 3oure enemys ben neigñ sibbe to hem ¶ And certes as in þat· he condicioñ is bettre þen is 3oures [2567] ¶ þenne let· vs consideren also of· þe counseilynge of· hem þat· counseleden 3ou to taken sodeyn vengeañce whe*þer* it· acorde to resoñ or non. [2568] and certes 3e knowen wel nay. [2569] ffor as by right· and resoñ þer may no man take vengaunce of· no wight ¶ But· þe Iugge þat· haþ Iurdixioñ of· hit [2570] whan it· is gr*a*unted him to take þilke vengeaunce hastely or attemp*er*elly as þe lawe requyreþ [2571] ¶ And 3et· more ouer of· þilke worde þat· Tullius clepeþ consenting· [2572] þou schalt· consente if· þin mighte & þin power may conseinte and suffice to þin wilfulnesse and to þin counseiloures. [2573] ¶ And certes þou mayst· wel say þat· nay [2574] ¶ ffor sikerly as for to speken pr*o*prely we may do no þing· but· oonly such þing· as we may doon rightfully [2575] ¶ And certes rightfully ne may 3e take no veng*a*unce as of· 3oure pr*o*pre auctorie [2576] ¶ Then· may 3e seen þat· 3oure power ne c*o*nsenteþ nou3t· ne acordeþ nou3t· w*ith* 3our willefulnesse [2577] Now lete vs examine þe þridde poynt· þ*at*· Tullius clepeþ c*o*nsequent [2578] Thou schalt· vnderstanden þat· þe vengaunce þat· þou p*ur*posest· for to take is consequent· [2579] And þ*er*fore falleþ anoþ*er* vengaunce. P*er*il. and werre and oþre damages w*ith*oute*n* nombre of· whiche we ben nou3 warre as at· þis tyme [2580] ¶ And as touchinge þe forþe poynt/. þat Tulli*us* clepeþ engendrynge [2581] ¶ þou schalt· considere þat· þis wrang· which þat· is don to þe is engendred of· þe hate of· þin enemys [2582] and of· þe vengeañce takynge ¶ And vpon þat· wolde engendre anoþ*er*, vengeañce and mochel sorwe and wastyng· of· richesse as I sayde er

[2583] ¶ Now s*ir* as touchinge to þe poynt· þat Tullius clepeþ causes which· þat· is þe laste poynt [2584] ¶ Thou

schalt vnderstande þat þe wrong þat þou hast receyued haþ certein causes [2585] whiche þat clerkes clepen Oriens et Officiens and causa longinqua and causa propinqua ¶ This is to sayn þe ferre cause [*et la prouchaine;* [2586] *la loingtaine est Dieu qui est cause de toutes causes* [2587] *la prouchaine est tes trois ennemis* (Le Mén. i. 212)] [2588] accidental was hate [2589] The causes material ben þe .v. woundes of þin douȝter [2590] ¶ The cause formale is þe maner of here worchinge þat brouȝten laddres and clomben in at þine wyndowes / [2591] ¶ The cause final was for to slee þin douȝter it latted nought in as moche as in hem was [2592] ¶ But for to speken of þe ferre cause as [1] what ende þey schullen come Or what 'schal betyden of hem in þis caas ne can I nouȝt deeme, but by coniectyng and by supposynge [2593] ffor we schuln suppose [*qu'ils avendront*] to a wicked ende [2594] by cause þe book of decrees saith ¶ Selden or wiþ-gret peyne ben causes brouȝt to an ende when þey ben baldly bygonne

[2595] Now *sir* if men asked me why þat ȝe suffren men to don ȝou þis vilenye Certes I can not wel answere as for no soþfastnes [2596]. ffor þe appostel saiþ þat þe sciences and þe Iuggementz of oure lord god ben mighty and deepe [2597] ¶ Ther may no man *comprehende* ne serche hem sufficiently [2598] ¶ Naþeles by certeins *presumpcioñs* & coniectynges I halde and bileeue [2599] þat god þat is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse haþ suffred þis bytyde by iuste cause resonable

[2600] ¶ þin name is mellibe þis is to say a man þat drinkeþ hony [2601] ¶ Thou hast y-drunke so meche hony of þe swete temperel richesses and delices & honures of þis world [2602] þat þou art drunken and hast forȝeten oure lord ihu crist þin creatour [2603] ¶ Thou hast nouȝt don to him such honour as þe oughte [2604] ¶ Ne þou hast nouȝt wel take heede to

þe wordes of Ovide þat saiþ [2605] vnder þe hony of þe goodes of þin body is hyd þe venym þat sleeþ þe soule [2606] ¶ And Salomon saiþ ¶ If þou hast founden hony ete of hit what sufficeþ [2607] ¶ ffor if þou ete of hit out of mesure / þou schalt spewe and be needy and pore [2608] ¶ And peraduenture crist hath þe in spite and haþ turned away fro þe his face and his eres of misericorde [2609] and also he haþ suffred þat þou hast ben y-punyssht/ in þe maner þat þou hast y-trespast [2610] ¶ Thow hast don synne aȝeins oure lord iħu crist [2611] ¶ ffor certes þe þre enemys of mankynde þat is to say þe fleisscħ. þe ffeend. and þe worlde [2612] ¶ þou hast suffred hem to entre in þin herte wilfully by þe wyndowes of þy body [2613] and hast nouȝt defended þe sufficeāntly aȝeins here defautes and here temptacioñs So þat þay haue wounded þi soule in fyue place. [2614] ¶ this is to sayn þe deedly synnes þat ben entrede in to þin herte by þine .v. wittes [2615] And in þe same manere oure lord ihesu crist haþ and wolde and haþ suffred þat þine þre enemys ben entred in to þin hous by þe wyndowes [2616] and han wounded þine doughtres in þe forseyde manere

[2617] ¶ Certes quod Mellibe I se wel þat þat ȝe enforce ȝou mochel by wordes to ouercome me in such a manere þat I schal now vengen me of myn enemys [2618] Schewynge me þe periles and þe eueles þat mighten ffalle of þis vengeañce [2619] ¶ But who so wolde considere in alle vengañces [1] þe periles and eueles þat mighte sewe of vengañce takynge [2620] a man wolde neuere take vengañce and þat were harme [2621] ffor by þe vengaunce takynge ben þe wickede men disseuered fro þe goode men [2622] ¶ And þo þat han wille to don wickednesse restreynen here wickede purpos whan þey seen þe punysschyng and þe chastysing of trespasours

[2623] [And to this answered dame Prudence.: 'Certes,' said she, 'I grant you that from vengeance come many

benefits as well as many evils: [2624] yet vengeance belongeth not to "a singuler persone," but only to the judges, and to those who have jurisdiction over evil-doers.'] [2625] ¶ And ȝit' say I more þat' right' as a singuler *per*sone synneþ in takinge vengañce of' anoþ*er* man: [2626] Right' so synneþ þe Iugge if' he take no vengañce of hem þat' it' han desserued // [2627] ffor Senek' saiþ þus þat' mayster is good þat' reproeueþ schrewes [2628] ¶ And as Cassidory saiþ. A man dredeth to don outrages: whan he woot' and knoweþ þat' it' displeseþ þe Iuge and þe soue*r*aignes [2629] ¶ And anoþ*er* saiþ þe Iugge þat' dredeth do don right' makeþ schrewes [2630] ¶ And seint' Poul þe appostel saiþ in his epistle whan he writeþ vnto þe Romayns that' þe Iuges beren nought þe spere wiþouten cause. [2631] but' þay beren it to punysschen þe schrewes and þe mysdoers and for to defende þe goode men [2632] ¶ If' ȝe woln þenne take vengañce of' ȝoure enemys: ȝe schuln retourne or haue ȝoure recours to þe Iuge þat' haþ þe Iurdexioñ vpon him [2633] & he schal punyssche hem as þe lawe axeþ and requyreþ

[2634] ¶ A q*uod* Melibe þis vengañce likeþ me noþing' [2635] ¶ I beþinke me now how fortune haþ norisched me fro my childhode and haþ holpen me to passe many a str*a*unge pas [2636] ¶ Now wol I assayen here trowynge w*ith* goddes grace and helpe þat' sche schal helpe me my schame for to venge

[2637] ¶ Certes q*uod* Prudence if' ȝe woln worche by my counseille: ȝe schuln nouȝt assaye fortune by no way. [2638] Ne ȝe schuln nought' lene ne borwe vnto hire after þe word of' Senek' [2639] ffor þinges þat' ben folily doon and þat' ben in hope of' ffortune schuln neu*er*e come to a good ende [2640] ¶ and as þe same senek' seiþ ¶ The more clere and þe more schynynge þat' fortune is: þe more brutel and þe sonnere y-broke sche is [2641] ¶ trusteþ nouȝt' in hire for sche nys noþing' stedefast' ne stable [2642] ffor when þou trowest' to be most' siker or seure of' hire

helpe: sche wol fayle þe and disceyue þe [2643] ¶ And wher as ȝe sayn þat fortune haþ norisshed ȝou fro ȝoure childhode [2644] I say ȝou þat in so mochel schuln ȝe þe lasse trusten in hire and in hire witte [2645] ¶ ffor Senek saiþ that what man is norisched by fortune: sche makeþ him to gret a fool [2646] ¶ Now þenne seþens ȝe desire and aske vengañce ¶ And þe vengañce þat is doon after þe lawe and biforn þe Iugge ne likeþ ¹ȝou nought [2647] and þe vengañce þat is don in hope of fortune is perilous and vncerteyn [2648] ¶ Thenne haue ȝe non oþer remedye but for to haue ȝoure recours vnto þe souerayn Iuge þat vengeþ alle vilanyes and wronges [2649] ¶ And he schal venge ȝou after þat þin self witnesseþ [. . . . .] [2650] leueþ þe vengañce to me and I schal don hit

[2651] ¶ Mellibe answerde ¶ If I ne venge me nouȝt of þe wrong þat men han doon to me [2652] ¶ I schal sompne or warne hem þat han don þis vilanye to me and alle oþre to don me anoþer vilanye [2653] ¶ ffor it is writen ¶ If þou take no vengañce of an olde vilanye: þou sompnest þin aduersarie to don þe a newe vylanye [2654] [*Et ainsi, par souffrir l'en me feroit tant de villenies de toutes pars*] þat I mighte neyþer bere it ne sustene [2655] and so schulde I be ouersette and halden ouer lowe [2656] ¶ ffor men sayn ¶ In mochil suffrynge schullen many þinges falle vnto þe whiche þou schalt not mowe suffre

[2657] ¶ Certes quod Prudence I graunte þat ouer mochil suffrañce / is nought good [2658] ¶ But ȝet ne folweþ it nouȝt þer-of þat euery persone to whom men don vilanye take of it vengañce [2659] ffor þat appertineþ and longeþ al only to þe Iuges ffor þey schuln venge þe vilenyes and þe iniuries [2660] and perfore þo tuo auctoritees þat ȝe han sayde aboue ben oonly vnderstanden in þe Iuges [2661] ¶ ffor whan þey suffren ouer mochil þe wronges and vilanyes ben don

wiþouten punysschinge [2662] þay sompne nou3t a man only for to do newe wronges but' þay comaunden it' [2663] ¶ Also a wise man saiþ þat' þe Iuge þat' correcteþ nou3t þe synnere comaundeþ and biddeþ him to do synne [2664] ¶ And þe souerains and þe Iuges / mighten in here lande so mochel suffren of' þe schrewes and mysdoers [2665] þat' þey schulden by such suffraunce / by proces of' tyme wexen of' suche power and might' þat' þey schulde putte oute þe Iuges and þe soueraignes from here places [2666] and at' þe laste maken hem leesen here lordschipes

[2667] ¶ But' let' vs now putte þat' 3e han leue to vengen 3ou [2668] ¶ If' 3e ben nou3t' of' might' and power as now to vengen 3ou [2669] ffor if 3e woln maken comparisoñ vnto þe might' of' 3oure aduersaries ¶ 3e schullen fynden in many þinges þat' I haue schewed 3ou ben þis þat' here condicioñ is bettre þan 3oures [2670] ¶ And *þer*fore say I þat it' is good as now þat' 3e suffre and be pacient'

[2671] ¶ fferþermore 3e knowen þat' after þe co*mm*une sawe it is a woodnesse a man to streyne[1] a3eins a strenger or a more mighty man þen is himself' [2672] ¶ And for to stryue wiþ a man of' eueue strengþe þat' is to say [2]wiþ a strong' man as he is it' is *per*il [2673] ¶ And for to stryue wiþ a waykare man it' is folye. [2674] and *þer*fore schulde a man fle stryuyng/ as mochel as he mighte [2675] ¶ As Salomon saith ¶ It' is a gret' worschipe to kepyn him fro noyse and stryf' [2676] ¶ And if' it' so bifalle or happe þat a man of' grettere might' and strengþe þan þou art' do þe greuaunce [2677] study and busy þe raþer to stille þe same greuaunce þan for to venge þe [2678] ¶ ffor Senek' saiþ þat' he putteþ him in gret' *per*ile þat' stryueþ wiþ a gretter man þan he is himself' [2679] ¶ And Catoun saiþ if' a man of' heyer astate or degre or more mighty þen þou do þe annoye or greuañce Suffre him [2680] for he þat' ones haþ greued þe

[1 (*margin*) stryue]

may anoþer tyme releue þe and helpe þe [2681] ¶ 3it sette I cas 3e han boþe mi3ht and licence to vengen 3ou [2682] I say þat þer ben many þinges þat schuln restreynen 3ou of vengannce takinge [2683] and make 3ou for to encline and for to suffre and for to haue pacience in þe wronges þat han be don to 3ou [2684] ¶ ffirste and forþward if 3e woln concider þe defautes þat ben in 3oure owne *per*sone [2685] for whiche defautes god haþ suffred 3ou to haue þis tribulacioñ as I haue sayde 3ou here byforn. [2686] ¶ ffor þe Poete saiþ þat we oughten paciently taken þe tribulacioñs þat comeþ / to vs when we þenken and consydren þat we han disserued to han hem [2687] ¶ And seint Gregory saiþ ¶ þat whan a man considereþ wel þe nombre of his defautes and of his synnes [2688] þe peynes and þe tribulacioñs þat he suffreþ semen þe lasse vnto him [2689] ¶ And in als mochel as him þenkeþ his synnes þe more heuy and greuous. [2690] ¶ In so moche semeþ his peyne þe li3hter and þe esyer vnto him [2691] ¶ Also 3e owen to encline and to bowen 3oure herte to taken þe pacience of oure lord Ihesu crist as saiþ seint Petre in his Epistles [2692] ¶ Ihesu crist he saiþ haþ suffred for vs and 3euen ensample vnto eu*er*y man to folwe and to sewe him [2693] ffor he dede neu*er* synne ne neuere ne came a vileyns word out of his mouþ [2694] when men cursed him he cursed he*m* nou3ht ¶ And when men beten him he manased hem nou3ht [2695] ¶ Also þe grece pacience whiche seintes þat ben in pa*r*adys. han had in tribulacioñs þat þey han suffred wiþoute*n* eny desert or gilte [2696] aughte mochel to stere 3ou to pacience [2697] [*Après, moult te doit encliner à patience*] [2698] considerynge þat þe tribulacioñs of þis worlde but litel while endureþ and soone passed ben and goon [2699] ¶ And þe Ioye þat man sekeþ to haue by pacience in tribulacioñ is *per*durable / after þat þe

apostel saiþ in þe epistle [2700] ¶ The ioye of' god he seiþ is p*er*durable þat' is to sayn [1] euer lastynge [2701] ¶ Also troweþ and belieueþ stedefastly þat' he is nougħt' wel ynorissħt' ne wel y-taugħt' þat' can nouȝt' haue pacience [. . . . . *no gap*] [2702] ¶ ffor salamon saiþ þat' þe doctrine of' þe witte of' man is knowen by pacience [2703] ¶ And in anoþ*er* place he saiþ ¶ he þat' is pacient' gou*er*neþ him by gret prudence [2704] ¶ And ȝet' Salamon saiþ þe angry and þe wraþful man makeþ noyse ¶ And þe pacient' man attemp*er*eth him and stilleþ him, [2705] he saiþ also ¶ It' is more worþ to be pacient' þen to be right' strong' [2706] And he þat' may haue þe lordschipe of' his owne herte is more to prayse þen he þ*at*' by his force and strengþe takeþ grete cites [2707] ¶ And þ*er*fore seiþ seint' Iame in his Epistle þat' pacience is a gret' v*er*tu of' p*er*fect*i*on

[2708] ¶ Certes q*uo*d Mellibe I g*ra*unte ȝou dame Prudence and pacience is a gret' vertu of' p*er*feccioñ [2709] ¶ But' euery man may not' haue þe p*er*fectioñ þat' ȝe sechen [2710] ne I am nougħt' of' þe nombre of righ̄t' p*ar*fyt' men [2711] ¶ ffor myn herte may neuer ben in pees vnto þe tyme it' be venged [2712] ¶ and al be it' so þat' it' was gret' p*er*il to my*n* enemys to don a vilanye in takinge vengaunce vpon me [2713] ¶ ȝet' token þey non heede of' þe p*er*ille ¶ But' fulfilleden here wikkede wille and here corage. [2714] and þ*er*fore me þenkeþ þat' men ouȝten not' to reproue me þougħ I putte me in-to a litel p*er*il for to auenge me [2715] ¶ And þougħ I do a gret' excesse þat' is to say þough I do a vengañce outrage by anoþer.

[2716] ¶ A q*uod* dame prudence ȝe seyn ȝoure wille and as ȝou likeþ [2717] ¶ But' in no caas of' þe world a man ne scholde nouȝt don outrage ne excesse for to vengen him [2718] ¶ ffor Cassidory saiþ þat' as euel doþ he þat' auengeþ him by outrage as he þat' doþ þe

outrage [2719] and þerfore ȝe schullen vengen ȝou after þe ordre of right þat is to sayn by þe lawe and [nought] by excesse ne by outrage [2720] ¶ Also if ȝe woln vengen ȝou of þe outrage of ȝoure aduersaries in oþer manere þenne right comaundeþ ȝe synnen [2721] ¶ Therfore saiþ Senek þat a man schal neuer vengen schrewednesse [by schrewednesse] // [2722] And if ȝe say þat right axeþ to defende violence by violence and fightynge by fyghtynge [2723] ¶ Certes ȝe say soþ when þe defens is don right anon wiþouten interualle or wiþouten taryenge or delay [2724] for to defenden him and nought for to vengen him [2725] ¶ And it bihoueþ þat a man putte such attemperañce in his defense [2726] þat men han no cause ne matier to reprocuen him þat defendeþ him of excesse and of outrage [. . . . . *no gap.*] [2727] ¶ Par de ȝe knowe wel þat ȝe maken non deffense / as now for to defende ȝou But for to venge ȝou [2728] and so seweþ it þat ȝe haue no wille to do ȝoure deede attemperelly [2729] and þerfore me þenkiþ [1] þat pacience is good ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ þat he þat is nought pacient schal haue gret harme

[2730] ¶ Certes *quod* Mellibe ¶ I *grau*nte wel þat whan a man is vnpacient and wroþ of þat þat toucheþ him nouȝt and þat appertieneþ nought vnto him þough hit harme him it is no wonder [2731] ¶ ffor þe lawe saiþ þat he þat is coupable þat entermeteþ him or medeleþ him wiþ suche þing as apperteyneþ nouȝt vnto him [2732] ¶ And Salo*mon* saith þat he þat entremeteþ him of þe noyse or þe stryf of anoþer man is ylike to him þat takeþ an hound by þe eeres [2733] ¶ ffor right as he þat takeþ a str*au*nge hounde by þe eeres is oþerwhile y-byten wiþ þe hounde / [2734] Right in þe same wyse is þe reson þat he haue harme þat by his inpacience medleþ him of þe noyse of anoþer man wher as it apperteyneþ nouȝt vnto him [2735] ¶ But ȝe knowen wel þat þis dede þat

is to sayn my griefˢ and myn disese toucheþ me rightˢ neigh [2736] and þerfore þoughe I be wroþ and impacientˢ itˢ is no meruaylle [2737] ¶ And sauynge 3oure grace I can nou3tˢ se þatˢ itˢ mighte gretly harme þoughe I toke vengañce [2738] ¶ ffor I am richer and more mighty þen myn enemys ben [2739] ¶ And wel knowe 3e þatˢ by monye and by hauyngˢ grete possessiõs ben alle þe þinges ofˢ þis world gouernede [2740] ¶ And Salamon saiþ. alle þinges obeyen to moneye

[2741] ¶ Whan Prudence hadde herd hire housbande to auaunten him ofˢ his richesse and ofˢ his moneye and dispreysinge ofˢ power and his aduersaries ¶ ¶ Sche spake and sayde on þis wise [2742] ¶ Certis deere sir I graunte 3ou þatˢ 3e ben riche and mighty [2743] ¶ And þatˢ þe richesses ben goode to hem þatˢ han wel y-geten hem and þatˢ wel can vsen hem [2744] ¶ ffor rightˢ as þe body ofˢ man may noughtˢ lyue wiþoute þe soule ¶ No more may itˢ lyue withouten temperele goodes [2745] and by richesse may a man geten him grace [2746] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Pamphilles Ifˢ eny gaddes doughter he saiþ be riche: Sche may cheese he saiþ ofˢ a þousand men [which she will for her husband [2747] and of the thousand] ¶ oon wol noughtˢ forsaken hire ne refusen hire [2748] ¶ And þis Pamphilles saith also ¶ Ifˢ þou be ri3tˢ happy ¶ þatˢ is to say. Ifˢ þou be rightˢ riche þou schaltˢ fynden a gret nombre ofˢ felawes and frendes [2749] ¶ And ifˢ þin fortune chaungeþ þatˢ is ifˢ þou wexe pore: ffare wel frendschipe and felaschipe [2750] ¶ ffor þou schaltˢ ben allone wiþouten any companye butˢ ifˢ itˢ be þe companye ofˢ good folkˢ [2751] ¶ And 3itˢ saiþ þis Pamphilles more ouer / þat þey þat ben þralle & bonde ofˢ linage schuln ben maad worþy and noble by þe richesses. [2752] ¶ And rightˢ so as by richesses þer comen many goodes ¶ Rightˢ so by pouertˢ comeþ many harmes and eueles. [2753] ffor gret pouertˢ con-

streigneþ [1]a man to don many eueles. [2754] And þer-fore clepeþ Cassidore Pouert' . þe mooder of' ruyne [2755] þat' is to say þe moder of ouerþrowing' or fallyng' doun [2756] ¶ And þerfore saith Pieres alphouns ¶ On of' þe grettest' aduersary of' þis world is [2757] when a freo by kynde or of' birþe is constreigned by pouert' to eten þe almes of' his enemy [2758] ¶ And þe same saiþ Innocent' in oon of' his bookes. þat' sorwfulle and myshappy is þe condicioñ of' a pouere begger [2759] ¶ ffor if' he axe noughť his mete he deyeþ for hunger [2760] ¶ And if' he axe he deyeþ for schame ¶ And algates necessite constreigneþ him to axe [2761] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salamon þat' bettre is to deye þan to haue such pouert' [2762] ¶ 3et' saiþ Sala-mon þat' bettre is to deye of' bitter deþ þan for to lyue in suche wyse [2763] ¶ By þese resoñs þat' I haue sayde vnto 3ou and by many oþer resoñs þat' I kouþe say [2764] ¶ I graunte 3ou þat' richesse ben good to hem þat' geten hem wel and to hem þat' wel vsen þe richesses [2765] ¶ And þerfore wol I schewe 3ow how 3e schuln haue 3ou [*en acquerant Richesses et en amassant icelles* (MS Reg. 19 C vii, leaf 140, back.)]

[2766] ¶ fferst' 3e schuln geten hem wiþouten gret' desire by good leysir sokyngly and nou3t' ouer hastily [2767] ¶ ffor a man þat' is to desyringe to gete richesse abandoneþ him ferst' to þefte and to alle oþer eueles [2768] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salamon ¶ he þat' haste þ him ouer busyly to waxe ryche schal ben non Innocent [2769] ¶ he saiþ also þat' þe richesse þat' hastely comeþ to a man ¶ sone and lightly goþ and passeþ fro a man [2770] ¶ But' þat' richesse þat' comeþ lytel and litel waxeþ alwey and multiplieþ [2771] And *sir* 3e schuln gete richesse ynough by 3oure witte and by 3oure *trauayle* vnto 3oure *profyt*/ [2772] and þat' wiþouten wrang' or harme doynge to ony oþer *persone* [2773] ¶ ffor þe lawe

saiþ þat' *per* makeþ no man himself' ryche if' he do harm to anoþ*er* wigħt' [2774] [*car la loy dit que nul ne se face riche au dommage d'autruy* (Le Ménagier de Paris, tome i. page 222)] [2775] ¶ And Tull*ius* saiþ ¶ þat' no sorwe ne no drede of' deþ ne no þing' þat' may falle vnto man [2776] is so mochil aʒeins nature ¶ as a man to encresce his owne *pro*fyt' to þe harme of anoþ*er* man [2777] ¶ And þouʒ þe grete men and þe riche men geten richesse more lightly þen þou [2778] ʒet' schalt' þou nouʒt' ben ydel ne slowe to don þin profyt ¶ ffor þou schalt' in alle wise flee ydelnesse [2779] ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ þat' ydelnesse techeþ man to don many eueles [2780] ¶ And eek' he saiþ þat' he þat' trauayleþ and busyeþ him to tylyen his lande schal eten breed [2781] but he þat' is ydel and casteþ him nought' to no busynesse ne occupacioñ schal falle in-to pouert' and deye for hunger [2782] ¶ and he þat' is ydel & slowħ can neuer fynde couenable tyme for to doon his *pro*fyte [2783] ffor [1] þer is a *ver*sifiour þat' saiþ þat' þe ydel man excuseþ h*im* in wynter by cause of' þe grete colde ¶ And in somer by cause of' þe grete hete [2784] ¶ ffor þise causes saiþ Catoñ ¶ wakeþ and enclyneþ ʒou nought' ou*er* mochil for to slepe ¶ ffor ou*er*moche reste norisseþ and causeþ many vices [2785] ¶ And *per*fore saiþ Seint' Ierom ¶ Doþ some goode deedes þat' þe deuyl which is oure enemy ne fynde ʒou vnoccupied [2786] ¶ ffor þe deuel ne takeþ nouʒt' lightly vnto his worchinge suche as he fyndeþ y-occupyed in goode werkes

[2787] ¶ Thenne þus ¶ In getynge riches ȝe mosten flee ydelnesse [2788] ¶ and afterwarde ȝe schuln vse þe richesses þe whiche ȝe han geten by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure *tra*uayle [2789] in suche a manere þat' men halden ȝou not' to scars ne to sparynge ne to fool large þat' is to say ou*er* large a spender [2790] ¶ ffor right' as men blamen an auerous man by cause of' his skarste and þinking' [2791] in þe same wyse is he to blame

þat' spendeþ ouer largely [2792] ¶ And *per*fore saiþ Catoñ ¶ vse þine riches þat' þow hast' y-geten [2793] in such manere þat' men han no matiere ne cause to clepe þe wrecche ne chynche [2794] ¶ ffor it is gret' schame to a man to haue a pou*er*e herte and a riche purse [2795] ¶ he saiþ also þe goodes þat' þou haste y-geten vse hem by mesure þat' is to sayn spende mesurably [2796] ¶ ffor þey þat' folily wasten and dispenden þe goodes þat' þey han [2797] whan þay haue no more p*ro*pre of' here owne: þey schapen hem to take þe goodes of' ano*þer* man [2798] ¶ I say þanne þat' he schal flee auarice [2799] vsynge 3oure richesse in suche a man*er*e that men say not þat' 3oure richesses ben y-buried [2800] but' þat' 3e han hem in 3oure mi*gh*t' and in 3oure weldynge [2801] ffor a wise mãn reproueþ þe auerous man and saiþ þus in tuo vers [2802] ¶ wherto and why burieþ a man his goodes by his auarice and knoweþ wel þat' needes moste he dye [2803] ¶ ffor deþ is þe ende of' eu*er*y man as in þis p*re*sent' lyf' [2804] ¶ And for what' cause or encheson ioigneþ he him or knetteþ he hem so faste vnto his goodes [2805] þat' alle his wittes mowen nou3t' disseueren him or dep*ar*ten him fro his goodes. [2806] and knoweþ wel or owghte to knowe þat' whan he is deed he schal nou3t' bere out' of' þe world wiþ him [2807] ¶ and *per*fore saiþ seint' Austyn þat' þe auerous man is likned vnto helle [2808] ¶ þat' þe more it' cheweþ þe more desir it' haþ to swelwe and deuoure [2809] ¶ And as wel alle 3e wolde eschewe to ben y-cleped an auerous man or a chynche [2810] ¶ As wel schulde 3e gouerne 3ou and kepe 3ou in such a wyse þat' men clepe 3ou nou3t' to large [2811] ¶ *per*fore Tulli*us* [1]saiþ ¶ The goodes he saiþ of' þin hous schulde not' ben hydde ne kepte in cloos but' þat' þay mi*gh*te ben opened wiþ pitee and with debonairtee [2812] þat' is to say to 3euen hem part' þat han gret' neede [2813]

¶ Ne þine goodes schullen not' ben so opene to ben euery mannes goodes [2814] ¶ afterward in getynge of' 3our richesses ¶ And in vsynge hem 3e schuln alway haue þre þinges in 3oure herte [2815] [*c'est assavoir, Dieu, conscience, et bonne fame, et renommée*. [2816] *Tu dois doncques avoir Dieu en ton cuer* (Le Ménagier, i. 224)] [2817] ¶ And for no richesse 3e schuln doon no þing' þat' may be displesaunce to god þat' is 3oure creatour and 3oure maker [2818] ¶ ffor after þe word of' Salamon ¶ hit' is bettre to haue a luytel good wiþ þe loue of' god. [2819] þan to haue mochil good and tresour and lese þe loue of' his lord god [2820] ¶ And þe prophete saiþ. þat' better it is to ben a good man and haue lytel good and tresour. [2821] þan to be halden a schrewe and to haue gret' richesse [2822] ¶ 3et' say I · forþermore þat' 3e schuln don 3oure busynesse to geten 3ou richesse [2823] So þat' 3e geten hem wiþ good conscience [2824] ¶ And þe appostel saiþ þat' þer is no þing' in þis world of' which we schulden haue so gret' ioye: as when oure conscience bereþ vs good witnesse [2825] ¶ And þe wise man saiþ ¶ The substaunce of' a man is ful good when synne is nought in mannes conscience [2826] ¶ Aftirward in getyng' of' 3oure Richesses and in vsynge of' hem: [2827] 3e moste haue gret' busynesse and gret' diligence that' 3oure goode name be alwey kepte and conserued [2828] ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ ¶ þat' better it is and more auayleþ a man to haue good name þen to haue grete richesses [2829] ¶ And þerfore he saiþ in anoþer place ¶ Do gret' diligence saiþ Salamon in kepyng' of' þin frende and of' þin goode name [2830] ¶ ffor it schal lenger abyde with þe þan eny tresour be it' neuer so precious [2831] ¶ And certes he schulde nou3t' be cleped a gentil man þat' after god and good conscience alle þinges lefte þat' he ne doþ his busynesse ne diligence to kepen his good name [2832] ¶ And Cassidorie saiþ þat' it' is signe of' a good herte whan a man loueþ and desyreþ to haue a good name

[2833] ¶ And þerfore seiþ seintꝰ austyn þatꝰ þer ben tuo þinges þatꝰ ben necessary and needfulle [2834] ¶ And þatꝰ is good consciens [2835] to þin owne persone inward and good loos ffor þin neyhebour outward [2836] ¶ And he þatꝰ trusteþ him so mechel in his goode conscience [2837] þatꝰ he displeseþ and setteþ itꝰ atꝰ nouȝtꝰ his good name or loos and rekkeþ nouȝtꝰ þat he kepeþ nouȝtꝰ his good name nys butꝰ a cruel cherle

[2838] ¶ Sire now haue I schewed ȝow how ȝe schuln doon in getynge ofꝰ richesse and how ȝe schuln vsen hem [2839] ¶ And I se wel þatꝰ for þe truste þatꝰ ȝe han in richesse ȝe wollen moeue bataile ¹and werre [2840] ¶ I counsele ȝou þatꝰ ȝe begynne no werre in truste ofꝰ ȝoure richesses ¶ ffor þey sufficen nouȝtꝰ werres to meyntene [2841] ¶ And þerfore saiþ a Philosophre ¶ Thatꝰ a man desireþ and wol algates han werre schal neuer haue sufficaunce [2842] ¶ ffor þe richere þatꝰ he is þe gretter despenses mootꝰ he make ifꝰ he wole haue worschipe and victory [2843] ¶ And Salamon saith þatꝰ þe grettere richesse þatꝰ a man haþ þe more dispendoures he haþ [2844] ¶ And deere *sir* al be itꝰ so þatꝰ for ȝoure richesses ȝe may han moche folkꝰ [2845] ¶ ȝetꝰ byhoueþ itꝰ noughtꝰ ne itꝰ is nouȝtꝰ good to begynne werre wher as ȝe may in oþer manere haue pees vnto ȝoure worschipe and profytꝰ [2846] ¶ ffor þe victories ofꝰ Batailles þatꝰ ben in þis world liþ nouȝtꝰ in gretꝰ nombre ofꝰ multitude ofꝰ poeple ne in þe vertu ofꝰ manꝰ [2847] butꝰ itꝰ lith in þe wille and in þe hande ofꝰ our lord ihesu cristꝰ // [2848] And þerfore Iudas Makabeus which was goddes knightꝰ [2849] when he schulde fighten aȝeins his aduersaries þatꝰ hadde a gretter nombre & a gretter multitude ofꝰ folkꝰ and strenger þen was þe poeple ofꝰ Machabee [2850] ¶ ȝetꝰ he recomforted his litel companye and sayde rightꝰ in þis wise [2851] ¶ As lightly *quod* he may our lord god almighty ȝeue victory to fewe folkꝰ

as to many folk' [2852] ¶ ffor þe victory of' bataile comeþ nou3t by gret' nombre of' poeple: [2853] but' it' comeþ fro oure lord of' heuene // [2854] ¶ And deere sire for as mochil as þer is no man certein if' it' be worþy þat' god 3eue him victory [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] or nou3t'. after þat' Sal*omon* seiþ [2855] ¶ þ*er*fore eu*er*y man schulde gretly drede werres to begynne [2856] ¶ And by cause þat' in batailles schuln fallen many p*er*iles [2857] ¶ And happeþ o*per*while þat' as sone is þe grete man slayn as þe litel man [2858] ¶ And as it' is writen in þe secoñde book' of' kynges ¶ The deedes of' batailles ben aduenturous and vncertein [2859] ffor as lightly as is oon y-hurt' wiþ a spere as ano*per*. [2860] and þerfore is gret' p*er*ile in werre ¶ Therfore schulde*n* men flee and eschewe werre in as mechel as a man may goodly [2861] ¶ ffor Salamo*n* saiþ ¶ he þat' loueþ p*er*ill: schal falle in p*er*ille

[2862] ¶ After þat' dame prudence hadde spoken in þis man*er*e ¶ Mellibe answerde and sayde [2863] ¶ I se wel dame Prudence þat' by 3oure faire wordes and by 3oure resoñs þat' [*vous mettez avant, que*] þe werre lykeþ 3ou noþing' [2864] ¶ But' I haue not' 3it' herde 3oure wyse counsel how I schal do in þis neede.

[2865] Certes q*uod* sche I counseile 3ou þat' 3e acorde wiþ 3oure adu*er*saries and þat' 3e haue pees wiþ hem [2866] ¶ ffor seint' Iame saiþ in his Epistles þat' by concord and pees þat' smale richesses waxen grete [2867] ¶ And by debat' and discord þe grete richesses fallen 'doun [2868] ¶ And 3e knowen þat' oon of' þe grettest' and most' sou*er*ayn þing' þat' is in þis world is vnite and pees [2869] ¶ And þ*er*fore sayde oure lord Ihe*su* cr*ist'* to his appostles in þis wyse [2870] ¶ Wel happy and blessed ben þay þat' louen and purchacen pees ffor þey ben cleped þe children of' god [2871] ¶ A q*uod* Mellibe now I se wel þat' 3e louen nou3t' m*yn* hono*ur* ne my worschipe [2872] ¶ 3e knowe wel þat' m*yn*

aduersaries han bygonne þis debaat and brigge by here outrage [2873] ¶ And ȝe seen wel þat' þey neuer queren ne preyen me nought' of' pees Ne þey asken me nouȝt' to be recoñsilede [2874] ¶ Wole ȝe þanne þat' I go meke me and obeye me to hem . and crye hem mercy ? [2875] ffor soþe þat' were not' my worschipe [2876] ¶ ffor right' as men sayn þat' ouer gret' homlynesse[1] engendreþ despysyng So fareþ it' by to gret' humilite and mekenesse [1 *corrected*]

[2877] ¶ Then bygan dame prudence to make semblaunt' of' wraþþe and sayde [2878] ¶ *Certez* sire saue ȝour *grace* ¶ I loue ȝour hono*ur* and ȝour p*rofyt'* as I do my*n* owne and eue*r* haue doon [2879] ne ȝe ne noon oþer ne saugh neuer þe contrarye [2880] ¶ And ȝet' if' I hadde sayd ȝe schulde haue purchaced þe pees and þe reconsiliacioñ ? I nad nought' mochel mystaken me ne y-sayde amys [2881] ¶ ffor þe wise ma*n* saith . þe dissencioñ bygynneþ by anoþ*er* man and þe reconsilynge begynneþ by þinself [2882] ¶ And þe p*rophete* saiþ ¶ fflee schrewednesse and do goodnesse [2883] ¶ Seche pees and folwe it' as mechil as in þe is / [2884] ¶ ȝet' saiþ he nought ¶ ȝet' schuln ȝe raþer pursewe to ȝour aduersaryes for pees þan þey schuln to ȝou [2885] ¶ ffor I knowe wel þat' ȝe ben so harde y-herted þat' ȝe wolen don no þing' for me [2886] ¶ And Salamo*n* saiþ ¶ þat he þat' haþ euer an hard herte ? atte laste he schal myshappe and mystryde

[2887] ¶ Whan Mellibe hadde herde dame Prudence make semblañt of' wraþþe ¶ he sayde in þis wyse [2888] ¶ Dame I p*ray* ȝou þat' ȝe ben nouȝt' displesed of' þinges þat' I say ȝou [2889] ffor ȝe knowe wel þat' I am angry and wroþ and þat' is no wonder [2890] ¶ and þo þat' ben wroþ witen not' wel what' þey doon ne what' þay sayn [2891] ¶ Wherfore þe p*rophete* saiþ þat' / troubled eyen han no cleer sight' [2892] ¶ But' sitteþ and counseileþ me right as ȝow liste . ffor I am redy to doon right' as ȝe woln desire [2893] ¶ And if' ȝe reproeuen me of' my folye ¶ I am þe more halden to loue ȝow and to preysen

3ou [2894] ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ ¶ he þat reproueþ him þat dooþ folye: [2895] he schal fynden grettere grace þan he þat disceyueþ him by wordes

[2896] ¶ Then sayde dame Prudence ¶ I make no semblaunt of wraþþe / ne of anger but for 3oure owne profyt [2897] ¶ ffor Salomon saiþ ¶ he is [1]more worþ þat reproueþ or chideþ a fool for his folye schewing him semblañt of wraþþe: [2898] þan he þat supporteþ him / [. . . . *no gap*] in his mysdoynge & laugheþ at his folye [2899] ¶ And þis same Salomon saiþ afterward þat by þe sorwful visage of man þat is to say by sory and heuy contynaunce of a man [2900] þe folk correcteþ and amendeþ him self

[2901] ¶ Than sayde Melibe ¶ I schal nou3t konne answere vnto so many resoñs as 3e putteþ to me and scheweþ [2902] Sayeþ schortly 3our wille and 3oure counseil and I am al redy to fulfille and parforme

[2903] ¶ Thenne dame Prudence discouered al hire wille vnto him and sayde [2904] ¶ I counseile 3ou *quod* he abouen alle þing þat 3e maken pees betwixen god and 3ou [2905] and beþ reconsiled vnto him and vnto his grace [2906] ¶ ffor as I haue sayde 3ou here-byforn god haþ suffred 3ou to haue þis tribulacioñ and disese for 3oure synnes [2907] and if 3e doon as I say 3ou god wol sende 3oure aduersaries vnto 3ou [2908] and maken 3oure aduersaries fallen at 3oure feet. redy to doon 3our wille and 3oure comaundement [2909] ¶ ffor Salomon saiþ whan þe condicioñ of man is plesaunt and likinge vnto god // [2910] he chaungeþ þe hertes of mannes aduersaries and constreigneþ hem to besechen him of pees and of grace [2911] ¶ And I pray 3ou let me speke wiþ 3our aduersaries in priue place [2912] ¶ ffor þey schuln nou3t knowe þat it be 3oure wille or 3oure assent [2913] and þenne whan I knowe here wille and here assent ¶ I may counsel 3ou þe more seurly

[2914] ¶ Dame *quod* Melibe doþ 3oure wille and

3oure likynge [2915] ¶ ffor I putte me holly in 3oure disposicioñ and ordinañce

[2916] ¶ Thenne dame Prudence whan sche saugh̄ þe goode wille of hire housbonde sche delyuered and took a-vys in hire self [2917] þenking how sche mighte bringe þis neede. vnto a good conclusioñ and to a good ende [2918] ¶ And whan sche saugh̄ hire tyme sche sente for þe aduersaries to come vnto hire in-to a priue place [2919] and schewed wysely vnto hem þe grete goodnesse þat comeþ of pees [2920] and þe grete harmes and periles þat ben in werre [2921] ¶ And sayde to hem in a goodly manere hou þat hem ¶ aughte to haue gret repentaunce [2922] of þe Iniury and wrong þat þey hadden doon to Mellibe hire lord and vnto hire and vnto hire doughter

[2923] ¶ And when þey herden þe goode wordes of dame Prudence. [2924] þey weren so supprised and rauysseht and hadden so gret ioye of hire þat wonder was to telle [2925] ¶ A lady q*uod* þay 3e han schewed vnto vs þe blessyng of swetnesse after þe sawe of dauid þe prophete [2926] ¶ ffor þe reconsilyng which we ne ben nou3t worþy to haue in no manere [2927] ¶ But we oughten requiren hit wiþ gret contricioñ & [1]humilite [2928] 3e of 3oure grete goodnesse han presented vnto vs [2929] ¶ Now se we wel þat þe science and þe connynge of Salamon is ful trewe. [2930] ffor he saiþ þat swete wordes multiplyen and encrescen freendes and maken schrewes to be debonaire and meeke

[2931] ¶ Certes q*uod* þay we putten oure dede and all oure matiere and cause al holly in 3oure goode wille [2932] and ben redy to obeye to þe speche of þe comaundement of my lord Mellibe [2933] ¶ And þerfore deere and benigne lady we preyen 3ou and besechen 3ou as mekely as we conne and mowen [2934] þat it like vnto 3oure grete goodnesse to fulfille in dede 3oure goode wordes [2935] ¶ ffor we considren and knowlechen

þat we han offended and y-greued my lord Melibe out of reson and mesure [2936] so ferforþ þat we be nouȝt of power to maken him amendes [2937] ¶ And þerfore we oblige vs and oure frendes for to don alle his wille and his comaundement [2938] ¶ But perauenture he haþ such heuynesse and such wraþþe to vs ward by cause of oure offense [2939] ¶ That woln enioygne vs such peyne þat we may not bere ne sustene [2940] ¶ And þerfore noble lady we beseche to ȝoure wommanly þite [2941] to taken such avisement/ in þis neede þat we ne oure freendes ne ben nouȝt disherited þurgh oure folye

[2942] ¶ Certes *quod* Prudence ¶ It is an hard þing and right perilous [2943] þat a man putte him al outrely in þe arbitracion and Iuggement and in þe might & power of his enmys [2944] ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ ¶ leeueþ me and ȝeueþ credence to þat þat I schal sayn ¶ I say yeuere peple and gouernours of holy chirche [2945] to þin sone to þin wyf [*à ton frère*] and to þin freende [2946] [*ne donne puissance sur toy en toute ta vie* [2947] *Se il a doncques deffendu que l'en ne donne . . . à frère ne à ami* (Le Ménagier, i. 230)] þe might of his body [2948] ¶ By a strenger reson he defendeþ and forbedeþ a man to ȝiue himself vnto his enemy [2949] ¶ And naþeles I counseile ȝou þat ȝe mystruste nouȝt my lord [2950] ¶ ffor I wot wel and knowe wel þat he is debonaire and meke large & courteys [2951] and no þing desirous of good ne coueytous to haue richesse [2952] ¶ ffor þer is no þing in þis world þat he desireþ saue worschipe and honour [2953] ¶ ffurþermore I knowe wel and I am right seur þat he schal noþing do in þis neede *with*outen my counseil [2954] ¶ And I schal so worchen in þis cause by þe grace of oure lord god þat ȝe schuln ben reconsiled vnto vs

[2955] ¶ þenne sayden þey wiþ oo voys ¶ Worschipful

lady we putten vs and oure goodes al fully in ȝoure wille and disposicioñ [2956] and [been] redy to come whatˢ [day] ȝou likeþ vnto ȝoure noblesse to lymyten vs or to assignen vs [2957] for to makẽn oure obligacioñ and bond as strongˢ as itˢ likeþ vnto ȝoure goodnesse [2958] þatˢ we may fulfille þe wille ofˢ ȝou and ofˢ my lord Mellibe

[2959] ¶ Whan dame Prudence hadde herd þe answeres ofˢ þese men: sche bad hem gon ayayn pryuyly [2960] ¶ And sche [1] retourned aȝein to hire lord Mellybe and tolde him how sche fond his aduersaries ful repentauntˢ [2961] and knowlechinge ful reuerently and lowely here synnes and here trespaces and how þey weren redy to suffre alle peyne. [2962] requyrynge and preyngˢ him ofˢ mercy and pite

[2963] ¶ Thenne sayde Mellibe: he is wel worþy to haue pardoñ and forȝeuenesse [*qui ne excuse point son péchié,* [2964] *mais le recongnoist et s'en repent et demande indulgence;* [2965] *car Sénèque dit là est rémission* (Le Ménagier, i. 231)] wher as confessioñ is [2966] ¶ ffor confessioñ is neighebor to Innocence [2967] ¶ And he saith in anoþer place ¶ he þatˢ haþ schame for his synne and knowlecheþ it [. . . . . *no gap*] ¶ And þerfore I assente and conferme to haue pees [2968] ¶ Butˢ itˢ is good þatˢ we do itˢ nouȝtˢ wiþouten þe assente and wille ofˢ oure freendes

[2969] ¶ Then was Prudence righteˢ glad and Ioyeful and sayde [2970] ¶ Certes sire *quod* sche ¶ ȝe han goodly and wel answered [2971] ¶ ffor rightˢ as by counseil assent and helpynge ofˢ ȝoure frendes ȝe han ben styred to vengen ȝou and make werre: [2972] Righteˢ so wiþouten here counseil schulle ȝe nought acorde þough ȝe ne haue pees wiþ ȝoure aduersaries [2973] ¶ ffor þe lawe saith ¶ þer is no þingˢ so good by way ofˢ kynde as þingˢ to ben vnbounden by hym þatˢ it was y-bounde

[2974] ¶ And þenne dame Prudence wiþouten delay or taryinge sent anon messagers for hire kyn and for hire olde frendes whiche þat were trewe and wyse [2975]

¶ and tolde hem by ordre in þe presence of' Mellybe al þe matiere as it' is abouen exp*r*essed and declared [2976] ¶ and p*r*eyden hem þat' þey wolden yeuen hire a wyse counseille ¶ what' best' were to doon in þis matiere [2977] ¶ And whan mellibeus counseil hadde taken here avys and good deliberac*i*on of' þe forsayde matiere [2978] and hadden examyned it' by gret' busynesse and gret' diligence [2979] þey ȝeuen ful counseil for to haue pees and reste [2980] And þat' Mellibe schulde receyue hit' with good herte of his aduersaries to forȝiuenes and mercy

[2981] ¶ And whan dame Prudence hadde herde þe assent' of' hire lord Mellibe and þe counseil of' hire frendes [2982] acorded wiþ hire wille and entencioñ [2983] sche was wonderly glad in herte and sayde [2984] ¶ Ther is an olde prouerbe q*uod* sche saiþ þat' þe goodnesse þat' þu mayst' do þis day do it' [2985] and abyd it/ nought' ne delay it' nought' til to morwe [2986] ¶ And þ*er*fore I counseile þat' ȝe sende ȝoure messagers whiche þat' ben discrete and wise [2987] vnto ȝoure adu*er*saries / tellynge hem in ȝoure bihalue [2988] if' þey wolen trete of' pees and acorde [2989] þat' þey schapen hem wiþouten delay or taryynge comynge to vs [2990] ¶ which þing' p*er*formed was in dede [2991] and whan þese trespasoures and repentynge folk' of' here folyes þat' is to say þe aduersaries of' Mellibe [2992] hadden herde what' þese messangeres [1]sayden vnto hem; [2993] þey weren ful glad and ioyfull*e* and answerden ful mekely and benygnely [2994] ȝeldynge *grac*es and þankes to here lord Mellibe and to all*e* his companye [2995] ¶ and schopen he*m* wiþouten delay to go wiþ þe messangeres and obeye to þe comaundement of' here lord Mellibe

[2996] ¶ And right' anon þey token here wey to Mellibe [2997] ¶ And toke þe so*m*me of' here trewe wordes and frendes to maken feiþ for hem and for to ben here borwes [2998] ¶ And whanne þey comen to

þe p*re*sence of' Mellibe ¶ he seyde hem þese wordes [2999] ¶ It' stant' þus q*uod* Mellibe and soþ it' is þat' 3e [3000] causeles and wiþouten skile and resoñ [3001] han don grete Iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf' Dame Prudence and to myn doughter also [3002] ¶ ffor 3e han entred in-to myn hous by vyolence [3003] and han doon suche outrage þat' alle men knowen wel þat' 3e han disserued þe deþ [3004] ¶ And þ*er*fore wil I knowen and wyten of' 3ou [3005] wheþer þat' 3e wollen putte þe punysschem*ent*' and chastisyng' and þe vengaun*ce* of' þis outrage in þe wille of' me and my wyf' dame Prudence or 3e woln nou3t'

[3006] ¶ Thenne þe wisest' of hem þre answerde for hem alle and sayde [3007] *sir* q*uod* he we knowen wel þat' we ben vnworþy to come to 3oure court' of' so gret' a lord and of' so worþy as 3e ben [3008] ffor we han so gretly mystaken vs and han offended and agult' in such a wise a3eins 3our heighe lordschip*e*. [3009] þat' trewly we han deserued þe deth [3010] ¶ But' 3it' for þe grete goodnesse and debonairte þat alle þe world witnesseþ of' 3oure p*er*sone [3011] ¶ we submitten vs to þe excellence and benignite of' 3oure *gra*cious lordschipe [3012] and ben redy to obeye to alle 3our comaundementz [3013] besechynge 3ou þat' of' 3oure m*er*cyable pite. 3e woln considre oure grete repentaunce and lowe submissiõn [3014] and to *gra*unte vs for3euenesse of' oure outragous trespas and offence [3015] ¶ ffor wel we knowe þat' 3oure liberalle grace & mercy strecche þ ferþer in-to good nesse þan don oure outrageous gultes and trespaces in-to wickednesse. [3016] al be hit'. þat' cursedly and dampnably we han gult' a3eins 3oure heyhe lordschipe

[3017] ¶ Thenne Mellibe took' him vp fro þe grounde ful benygnely [3018] and receyued here obligacioñs and here bandes by here oþes vppon here plegges and here borwes [3019] and assigned hem a certeyn day to retournen vnto his courtes [3020] ¶ ffor to accepte and receyue þe sentences and

þe Iuggementes þat Mellibe wolde comañde to ben don on hem by þe causes a-forn sayde / [3021] whiche þinges ordeyned euery man retournede [1] to his hous

[3022] ¶ And when þat dame Prudence saugh hire tyme sche f[r]eyned and axede hire lord mellibe [3023] what vengañce he þouȝt to take of his aduersaries

[3024] To which mellibe answerde and sayde ¶ Certez *quod* he I þenke and purpose fully [3025] to disherite hem of al þat þay han ¶ And for to putten hem in exile for euere

[3026] ¶ Certes *quod* Dame Prudence þis were a cruel sentence and mochel aȝeins resoñ [3027] ¶ ffor ȝe ben riche ynough and han no neede of oþer mennes good [3028] and ȝe mighte lightly geten ȝou a coueytous name [3029] which is a vicious þing and oughte [be] eschewed of euery man [3030] ¶ ffor after þe sawe of þe appostel Coueitise is roote of alle harmes [3031] ¶ And þerfore it were bettre to lese so mochel good of ȝoure owne þan for to take of here good in þis manere [3032] ¶ ffor better it is to leese good wiþ worschipe þenne it is good to wynne worschipe wiþ vilanye and schame [3033] ¶ And euery man oughte to don his busynesse and to geten him a good name [3034] ¶ and ȝet schal he nouȝt only kepen him in kepyng of his good name [3035] ¶ But he schal also enforcen him alwey to don som þing by which he may renouelle his good name [3036] ¶ ffor it is write þat þe olde goode loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed when it is nouȝt newed and renouelled [3037] ¶ And as touchinge þat ȝe sayn þat ȝe woln exile ȝoure aduersaries [3038] þat þenkeþ me mochil aȝeins resoñ and out of mesure [3039] ¶ Considereþ þe power þat ȝe han ȝouen ȝou vpon hemself [3040] and it is writen. þat he is worþy to lesen his priuilege þat misvseþ it ¶ The might and þe power þat is ȝouen him. [3041] And I sette caas þat ȝe might annoye hem þat peyne by right and by lawe [3042] which I

trowe ȝe may nouȝt do [3043] I say ne ne mighte nouȝt putte it to execucioñ *per*auenture [3044] and þenne were it likly to retorne to þe werre as it was byforn [3045]. ¶ And þerfore if ȝe woln þat men do ȝou obeissañce: ȝe moste deme more curteisly [3046] þis is to sayn ȝe moste ȝiue more esy sentences and Iugementz [3047] ¶ for it is writen þat he þat most courteisly comaundeth: to him men most obeyen [3048] ¶ And *per*fore I pray ȝou þat in þis necessite and in þis neede: ȝe casten *per*fore to ouercome ȝoure herte [3049] ¶ ffor Senek saiþ ¶ he þat oones ou*er*comeþ his herte: ouercomeþ twyes [3050] ¶ And Tullius saiþ ¶ Ther is no þing so comendable in a gret lord [3051] as whan he is debonaire and meeke and appeseþ him meekely [3052] ¶ And I pray ȝou þat ȝe woln forbere now to do vengañce [3053] in sueh a man*er*e. þat ȝoure goode name may be kepte and conserued [3054] and þat man may haue [1]cause and matiere to preyse ȝou of pite and of m*er*cy [3055] and þat ȝe han no cause to repente ȝou of þing þat ȝe doon [3056] ¶ ffor Senek seiþ: he ou*er*comeþ in euel manere. þat repenteþ him of his victory [3057] ¶ Wherfore I p*ray* ȝou let m*er*cy be in ȝoure herte [3058] to þeffecte and þe entent þat god almighty haue m*er*cy vpon ȝou in his laste Iuggem*en*t [3059] [*Car saint Jacques dit en son épistre: jugement*[2]] ¶ wiþoute*n* mercy schal be to him þat haþ no m*er*cy of anoþ*er* wight [2 Le Mén. i. 235]

[3060] ¶ Whan mellibe had herde þe grete skiles and resoñs of Dame Prudence and of hire wise informacioñs and techinges: [3061] his herte gan enclyne to þe wille of his wyf consyderyng to þe trewe entent [3062] conformed him anon ¶ And assented fully to worchen after hire counseil. [3063] and þankeþ god of/ whom procedeth all goodnesse þat him sente a wyf of so gret discrecioñ [3064] ¶ And when þe day came þat his aduersaries schulde apperen in his presence: [3065] he spake

to hem ful goodly and sayde to hem in þis wise/ [3066] ¶ Al be it' so þat' of' 3oure pruyde and by *pre*sumpcioñ and folye ¶ and of' 3oure necligence and vnku*n*nynge [3067] 3e han mysborn 3ou and trespassed to me /./ [3068] 3et' for as meche as I se and byholde 3oure grete humilite [3069] and þat' 3e ben sory and repentaunt' of' 3oure gultes ? [3070] it' constreigneth̄ me to do 3ou *grace* and *mer*cy [3071] ¶ Wherfore I receyue 3ou vnto my grace/ [3072] and for3iue 3ou outrely all*e* þe offenses Iniuries and wronges þat 3e han doon a3eins me and myne [3073] to þis effecte and to þis ende / þat' god of' his endeles mercy [3074] wol at' þe tyme of' oure deyinge for3iuen oure gultes þat' we han trespast' vnto him in þis wrecchede world // [3075] ¶ ffor douteles if' we ben sory and repentaunt' of' þe synnes and gultes þe whiche we han trespassed in þe sigħt' of' oure lord god ? [3076] he is so fre and so mercyful [3077] þat' he wol for3iuen vs oure gultes [3078] and bryngen vs to þilke blisse þat' neuer haþ ende. To which blisse he vs bringe That blood on crosse for vs gan springe *Qui cum patre* /

¶ Here endeþ Chaucers tale of' Mellibe //

¶ *Prologus* Monachi
[*on leaf* 234, *back*]

Whan ended was þe tale of Mellibe
And of Prudence and hire benignite
Oure hoost sayde as I am feyþful man
And By þe precious corpus Madryan
I hadde leuer þan a barel ale
That goode leef my wyf had herd þis tale
ffor sche nys no þing of such pacience
As was þis Mellibeus wyf Prudence
By goddes bones whan I bete my knaues [leaf 235]
Sche bringeþ me þe grete clobbed stanes
And cryeþ sle þe dogges eu*e*rychon
And breke boþe bak and bon
And if þat any neyghebour of myne
Wol nouȝt in chirche to my wif enclyne
Or be so hardy to hire to trespace
Whan sche comeþ home sche rumpeth me þe face
and cryeþ false coward wreke þin wyf
By corpus bones I wol haue þy knyf
And þou schalt haue my distaf and go spynne
ffro day to nigħt right þus sche wol begynne
Allas sche saiþ þat euer I was y-schape
To wedde a melksop or a coward ape /
That wil ben ouerled wiþ eu*e*ry wight
Thou darst nouȝt stonde by þy wyf aright
This is my lyf but if þat I wolde fight
And out at þe dore anon I mot me dight
Or elles I am lost but if þat I
Be like a wilde leoñ fool hardy
I wot wel sche wol do me slee som day
Som neihebore and þanne I go my way
ffor I am *per*ilous wiþ knyf on honde /
Al be it þat I dar hire nouȝt wiþstonde /

ffor sche is bigge in armes by my feiþ
That' schal he fynde þat hire mysdoþ or seiþ
But' lat' vs passe away fro þis matiere /
My lord sire monk' he saiþ be mery of' cheere /
ffor ye schul telle a tale trewely
Lo Rouchestre stant' here faste by
Ryd forþ myn owne lord brek' nou3t' our game
But' by my trouþe I knowe nou3t' 3oure name /
Wheþer I schal calle 3ou my lord daun Iohn̄
Or Daun Thomas or elles Daun Alboñ
Of' what' hous be 3e by your fader kyn
I vowe to god þou hast' a ful fayr skyn
It' is a gentil pasture þer þou gost' [leaf 235]
Thou art' nou3t' like a penañt' or a gost
Vppon my feiþ þou art' som officer
Som worþy Sexteyn or som Celerer
ffor by my fader soule as to my dome
Thou art' a maister whan þou art at' home
No pouer cloysterer ne no pouer novys
But' gouernour wyly and wys
And þer-with-al of' brawnes and of' bones
A wel faryng' *per*sone for þe nones
I *pray* to god 3iue him confusioñ
That' ferst' þe brought' in to religioñ
Thou woldest' haue ben a tredefoul arigħt'
Haddest' þou as gret' leue as þou hast' migħt'
To *per*fourme al þy lust' in engendure /
Thou haddest' bygeten many a creature
Allas why werest' þou so wyd a Cope
God 3if' me sorwe and I were a Pope
Nou3t' oonly þou but' eu*ery* mighty man
Thoughn̄ he were schore heyhe vpon his pan
Schulde haue a wyf' for al þis world is lorn
Religioñ haþ take vp al þe corn
Of' tredyng' and we borelle men ben schrimpes
Of' feeble trees þer comeþ wrecched ympes

This makeþ þat oure heires ben so sclendre
And feble þat þay may not wel engendre
This makeþ þat oure wyfes wol assay
Religious folk for þey may bettre pay
Of venus payement þen mowen we
God woot no lussheburghes paye ȝe
But beþ nought wroþ my lord þough þat I play
fful ofte in game a soþ I haue herd say
This worþy monk took al in pacience
And sayde I wil do al my diligence
As fer as sowneþ in to honeste
To telle ȝou a tale or tuo or þre
And if ȝou liste herkne hiderward [leaf 256]
I wol ȝou seyn þe lyf of seint Edward
Or elles tregedys first wol I telle
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my selle
Tregedye is for to telle a certein storye
As olde bookes maken memorie
Of hem þat stood in gret *prosperite*
And is y-falle out of heigh degre
In-to miserie and endeþ wrecchedly
And þey ben vercefyed comenly
Of sixe foote whiche þat men clepen examytron
In proce eek ben endited many oon
And eek in metre in many a sondry wyse
Lo þis aughte ȝou ynough suffyse
Now herkneþ if ȝou liste for to heere
But first I ȝou beseche in þis mateere /
þough I by ordre telle nouȝt þese þinges
Be it of Popes Emp*erours* or Kynges
And after here ages as m*en* writen fynde
But telle hem some bifore some behinde
As it comeþ now to my remembr*ance*
Haueþ me excused of myn ignorance

¶ Explic*it* *prologus monachi*

¶ Here telleþ þe monk' // De casib*us* viror*um* illustriu*m*
¶ C^m xxj^m

[*No breaks between the stanzas in the MS.*]

I Wol bewayle in maner of' Tregedye
The harme of' hem þat' standeþ[1] in heih degre [1 stoden, *later, in the margin*]
And fellen so þat' þer nas no remedye
To bringen hem out' of' here aduersite 3184
ffor certein when þat' fortune lust' to fle
Ther may no man of' hire þe cours wiþholde /
[2 Lat nonis truste on blyn[d] *prosperite*2] [2—2 *later, in margin*]
Beþ war by þis ensamples ȝong' and olde 3188

[*Lucifer.*]

At' lucifer þough he an aungel were ¶ P*ri*mo de lucifero
And nought a man at' him I wol begynne
ffor þeigh fortune may non aungel dere
ffrom heih degre ȝet' felle he for his synne 3192
Doun in-to helle wher as he ȝet' is Inne
O lucifer brightest' of aungeles alle
Now art' þou Sathanas þat mayst not' twynne [leaf 236, back]
Out' of' miserie which þou art' y-falle 3196

De *Adamo* [*in margin.*]

[LO Adam in the felde of/ Damascene. [Harl. MS 1758, *leaf* 134]
With goddis/ owne finger/ wroght/ was/ he.
And not bi getyng/ of/ mannes/ sperme vnclene.
And welte all Paradis/ sauyng/ oo tre. 3200
Had neuyr/ worldly man so hye degree.
As/ Adam had till he for his/ gouernaunce.
Was/ dryuen out/ of/ his/ hye prosperite.
To labour/ an to helle & to myschaunce.] [Harl. *extract ends*]

[*Sampson.*]

¶ Lo Sampson which was aunu*n*ciate
By þangel long' er his natiuite /
And was to god almigh̃ty consecrate
And stood in nobles whiles he mighte se
Was neuer such anoþer as was he
To speke of' strengþe and þer*to* hardynes
But' to his wyues tolde he his secre
Thurgh̃ which he slough̃ himself' þurgh̃ wrecchednes

¶ Sampson þis noble and mighty champioñ
Wiþouten wepen sauf' his handes tweye
he slough̃ and al to-rente þe leoun
Toward his weddyng' walkyng' by þe weye
his false wyf' eouþe him so plese and preye /
Til sche his counseil knewe and sche vntrewe
Vnto his foos his counseil gan bewreye
And him forsok' and took' anoþer newe

¶ An hundred foxes tok' Sampson for Ire
And alle here tayles he togyder bond
And sette þe foxes tayles alle on fuyre
ffor he in eue*r*y tail haþ putt' a brond
And þey brent' alle þe cornes in þat' lond
And eek' here Olyues and here vynes eeke
A þousend men eek' he slough̃ wiþ his hond
And hadde no wepne but' an asse cheeke

¶ Whan þey were slayn so þursted him þat' he
Was wel neigh̃ lorn for which he gan to preye
That' god wolde of' his peyne haue s̃om pite [leaf 237]
And sende him drinke or elles most' he deye /
And of' þis asse cheeke þat' was so druye
Out' of' a wang' tooþ sprang' anon a welle
Of' which he drank' ynough̃ schortly to seye
Thus hilpe him god as Iudici*um* can telle

¶ By verray force at' Gasan on a night'
Maugre philistiens of' þat' Cite
The gates of' þe toun he haþ vp pligħt'
And on his bakke y-karyed hem haþ he
heighe on an hille where as men mighte se
O noble almighty Sampsoñ leef' and deere
That' strong' and noble haþ be /
In alle þis world ne hadde þer ben þy peere

¶ This Sampsoñ neuer cyder drank' ne wyn
Ne on his heed came Rasour non ne scheere
By precepte of' þe messanger deuyn
ffor alle his strengþe was in his here.
And fully twenty ȝeer by ȝere
he hadde of' Israel þe gouernañce
But' after soone schal he wepe many a teere
ffor wommen schuln bringe him to meschañce

¶ Vnto his lemman Dalida he tolde
That' in his heeres alle his strengþe lay
And falsly to his fomen sche him solde
And slepyng' vpon hire barme vpan a day
Sche made to clippe or schere his here away
And made his foomen alle his crafte aspyen
And whan þat' þay him fond in such aray
They bonde him faste and putte out' his eyen

¶ But' er his heer was y-clipped or y-schaue
Ther was no bond þat' mighť him bynde
But' now is he in prisoun putte in a Caue
Where as þey made him at' þe querne grynde
O noble Sampson strengest' of' mankynde
O whilom Iugge in glorie and in richesse
Now maystow wepe with þin eyen blynde [leaf 237, back]
Sepenes þou art' fro wele falle in to wrecchidnesse

¶ The ende of þis Caytiffe was as I schal seye
his foomen made a feste vp-on a day
And made him as here fool biforn hem pleye
And þis was [in] a temple of gret aray
But at þe laste he made a foul affray
ffor he tuo postes schook and made hem falle /
And doun fel temple and al þer it lay
And slough himself and eek his foomen alle

¶ This is to say þe princes euerichon
And eek a þousand bodyes were þey slayn
Wiþ fallyng of þe grete temple of stoon
Of Sampson ne wol I no more sayn
Beþ war of þis ensample olde and playn
That noman telle here counseil to here wyues
Of such þing as þay wolde haue secre fayn
If þat it touche here lymes or here lyues

[*Hercules.*]

¶ Of Ercule þe soueraign conquerour ¶ De Ercule
Syngen his werkes lewede and heih renoun
ffor in his tyme of strengþe he bar þe flour
he slough and rafte þe skyn fro þe leoun
he of sent arwes leyde þe boost a doun
he arpyes slough þe cruel bridde̊s felle
he golden apples rafte þe dragoun
he drough out Serberois þe hound of helle

¶ He slough þe cruel tyraunt Buserus
And made his hors to frete him fleissh and boon
He slough þe verray serpent venymous
Of Achilles tuo hornes brark he oon
And he slough Cacus in a Cave of ston
He slough þe geaunt Anteus þe stronge /
He slough þe grisly boor and þat anoon
And bar þe heed vpon his necke longe

¶ Was neuer wigħt' siþen þe world bygan
þat' slough so many monstres as dede he
Thurgħ out' þis wilde world his name ran [leaf 238]
What' for his strengþe and for his bounte 3304
And euery Reeme went he for to see
He was so strong' þat' no man migħt' him lette
And boþe þe worldes ende saith trophe /
In stede of' boundes he a piler sette 3308

¶ A lemman hadde þis noble Campioñ
That' highte Deianyre freissh as may
And as þe clerkes maden mencioñ
Sche haþ him sent a scherte freisch and gay 3312
Allas þis scherte and weylaway
Enuenymed was subtily wiþ alle
That' or þat' he had wered it half' a day
It' made his boones fro his fleissch to falle / 3316

¶ But' naþeles some clerkes hire exusen
By oon þat' highte Nessus þat' it' maked
Be as be may I wol hire nought' accusen
But' on his bakke þe scherte he weres al naked 3320
Tille þat' his fleissh was fro þe venym blaked
And whan he saugh non oþer remedye
In hote coles he haþ himself' y-raked
ffor wiþ no venym deyned he to dye 3324

¶ Thus starf' þis worþy mighty hercules
Lo who may truste on fortune ony þrowe
ffor him þat' folweþ alle þis world of' prees
Er he be war is ofte y-leyd ful lowe 3328
fful wys is he þat' himself' can knowe
Beþ war for when þat' fortune lust' to glose /
Than wayteþ sche hire man doun to þrowe
By such a way as he wolde lest' suppose // 3332

[*Nebuchadnezzar.*]

¶ The mighty trone þe precious tresor
The glorious septir and realle mageste
That' hadde þe king' Nabugodonosor
Wiþ tunge vnneþe may discryued be
he twyes nam Ihe*rusalem* þe cite /
The vessel of' þe temple he wiþ him ladde
¶ At' Babiloyne was his souerain see /
In which his glorie and his delit' he hadde /

¶ De Rege Nabugodonosore

[leaf 238, back]

The fayrest' children of' þe blood royalle
Of Ie*rusalem* he dede do gylde anon
And maked eche of' hem to ben his þralle
Among' alle oþer Daniel was oon
That' was þe wisest' childe of' eu*er*ychon
ffor he þe dremes of' þe king' expowned
Wher as in Caldey clerk' was þer non
That' wiste to what' fyn his dremes sowned

¶ This proude king' leet' make a statue of' golde
Sixty cubites longe and seuen in brede
To which Image boþe 3onge and olde
Comaunded he to lowte and haue in drede /
Or in a fourneys ful of' fla*mm*es rede
He schal be brent' þat' wolde nought' obeye
But neuere wolde assente to þat' dede
Danyel ne his 3onge felawes tweye

¶ This king' of kynges proude and elat'
he wende god þat' sitte in mageste
Ne might' him nought' byreue of' his estate
But' sodeinly he lost' his dignite
And like a beeste him seemed for to be
And ete hey as an oxe and lay þer oute
In reyn wiþ wilde bestes walked he
Til a certein tyme was come aboute

¶ And ylike an Egles feþeres were his hères
And nayles like briddes clawes were /
God releeued him aᵗ certeyn ȝeeres
And ȝafᵗ him witte and þanne wiþ many a tere
he þankede god and euer his lyfᵗ in feere
Was he to don amys or more trespas
And or þatᵗ y-leyd was on his beere
he knew wel þatᵗ god was ful ofᵗ mightᵗ and *grace*

[*Belshazzar.*]

¶ his sone which þatᵗ highte Baltyzar
þatᵗ heeld þe regne after his fader day
he by his fader couþe nouȝtᵗ be war [leaf 239]
ffor prowd he was ofᵗ herte and ofᵗ array
And eekᵗ an ydolatre was he ay
his heihe astate asseured him in pryde
Butᵗ fortune caste him doun and þer he lay
And sodeinly his regne gan deuyde /

¶ De Baltazar *dicti* *Regis* Nabugodonosor filio

¶ A feste he made vnto his lordes alle
vpon a tyme he made hem bliþe be /
And þenne his officeres gan he calle
Goode bringeth forth þe vesselles q*uod* he
Which þatᵗ my fader in his *prosperite*
Outᵗ ofᵗ þe temple ofᵗ Ier*usalem* byrafte
And to oure heihe goddes þanke we
Ofᵗ honour þat oure eldres wiþ vs lafte

¶ His wyfᵗ his lordes and his concubynes
Ay drunken whiles here appetyte laste /
Outᵗ ofᵗ þis noble vesseles sondry wynes /
And on a wal þis kingᵗ his eyhen caste
And saugh an hande armles þat/ wrotᵗ ful faste
ffor feer ofᵗ which he quookᵗ and siked sore
This hande þat Baltazar made so sore agastᵗ
Wrotᵗ mane techel phares and no more

¶ In al þat lond magicien was þer non
That coube expoune what þis lettre ment
But Daniel expouned it anon
And sayde king god to þi fader sent
Glory and honour Regne tresor and rent
And he was prowde and no þing god ne dradde /
And þerfore god gret wreche vpon him sent
And him byrafte þe regne þat he hadde

¶ He was out cast of mannes companye
Wiþ asses was his habitacioñ
And eete hey as a beeste in wete and drye
Til þat he knew by grace and by resoun
That god of heuen haþ domynacioñ
Ouer euery regne and euery creature
And þenne haddè god of him compassioñ [leaf 239, back]
And him restored his regne and his figure

¶ Eke þou þat art his sone art proud also
And knowest alle þis þinges pryuyly
and art rebell to god and art his foo
Thou drank eeke of his vessels boldely
Thy wyf eek and þy wenche synfully
Drank of þe same vessels sondry wynes
And heryed false goddes cursedly
Ther fore to þe schapen gret pyne is /

¶ This hand was sent fro god þat on þe wal
Wrot mane techel phares truste me
Thin regne is doon þou weyest not at al
Deuyded is þy regne and it schal be
To Medes and to Perses ȝeuen quod he
And þilke same night þe king was slawe
And Daryus occupieth his degre
They he þerto nad neyþer right ne lawe

¶ Lordynges her-by ensample may ȝe take
How þat in lordschipe is no sikernesse
ffor whan fortune wole a man forsake
He bereþ a-wey his regne and his richesse /
And eek his freendes boþe more and lesse
And what man haþ freendes þurgh fortune
Mishap wole make hem enemys I gesse
This *prouer*be is ful soþ and ful *com*mune

[*Zenobia.*]

¶ Cenobya of Palymere þe queene
As writen *Per*siens of hire noblesse
So worþy was in armes and so keene
That no wigħt passed hire in hardynesse /
Ne in lynage ne in oþer gentillesse /
Of kinges blood of *Perce* sche descended
I saye þat sche nad nouȝt most fairnesse
But of hire schap sche migħt nogħt ben amended

¶ De Cenobia Palymer*ie* regina

¶ ffro hire childhode I fynde þat sche fledde
Office of *wo*mmen and to woode sche wente
And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde
With arwes brode þat sche to hem sente /
Sche was so swyfte þat sche anon hem hente
And whan þat sche was elder sche wold kille
Leouns luperdes and beres alto-rent
And in hire armes welde hem at hire wille

[leaf 240]

¶ Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seeke
And rennen in þe mounteinz al þe nigħt
And slepe vnder a bussche and sche coupe ecke
Wrastlen by *ver*ray force and *ver*ray migħt
Wiþ any ȝong man were he neuer so wigħt
Ther mighte no þing in hir armes stonde
Sche kepte hir maydenhed fro eu*er*y wigħt
To no man deyned hire to be bonde /

¶ But atte laste hir freendes han hire maryed
To Odenake a Prince of þat Cite
Al were it so þat sche hem longe taryed
And ȝe schuln vnderstonde how þat he
Hadde suche fantasies as hadde sche
But naþeles whan þey were knette in feere
They lyueden in ioye and in felicite
ffor sche of hem hadde oþer leef and deere /

[Saue oo thyng/ that/ sche wolde neuyr/ assente.] [Harl. MS 1758, f. 187]
By no wey þat he schulde by hire lye
But ones for it/ was hire pleyne entent
To haue a childe þe world to multiplye
And al so sone as sche might aspye
That sche nas nouȝt wiþ childe wiþ þat dede
Thanne wolde sche suffre him don his fantasye
Eftsone and nouȝt but ones out of drede /

¶ And if sche were wiþ childe at þilke caste
No more schulde he pleye þilke game
Til fully fourty dayes were paste
Thenne wolde sche ones do suffre him þe same
Al were þis Odenak wilde or tame
he gat nomore of hire for þus sche sayde
It was to wyfes lecchery and schame /
In oþer caas if þat men with hem playde [leaf 240, back]

¶ Tuo sones by þis Odonak had sche
The whiche sche kepte in vertu and lettrure
But now vnto oure tale turne we /
I saye þat worschipful creature
And wys þerwith and large wiþ mesure
So penyble in þe werre and curteys eeke
No more labour mighte in werre endure
Was non þey alle þis world men schulde seke

¶ Hire riche aray mighte nought be told
As wel in vessel as in hir clopinge
Sche was al cladde in perrye and in goolde
And eek sche lefte nought for non huntynge
To haue of sondry tonges folk knowynge
Whan pat sche leyser hadde and for to entende
To lerne bookes was al hire likynge
How sche in vertu might hir lyf dispende

[And schortly of/ this/ storie for to entrete.] [Harl. MS 1758, leaf 187, back]
¶ So doughty was hire housebande as sche
That pey conquered many regnes grete
In pe orient wip many a fair Cite
Apportienant vnto pe mageste
Of Rome and with strong hand heeld hem faste
Ne neuer might here fomen don hem fle
Ay whiles pat Oedenak dayes laste

¶ Here batayles who so luste hem for to ride ·
Agayn Sapor pe king and oper mo ·
And how pat al pis proces felle in ·dede·
Why sche conquered and what title had perto
And after of hire meschief and hire woo
how pat sche was beseged and y-take
let him vnto my mayster Petrarke go
That writ of pis ynough I vndertake

¶ Whan Odenake was deed sche mightily
The regnes huld and wip hir propre hand
Agayn hire foos sche faught trewely
That per nas king ne Prince in al pat land
That he nas gladde if pat he grace fand [leaf 241]
That sche ne wolde vpon his land werrey
With hire pey made alleyance by band
To ben in pees and lete hir ryde and pley

¶ The Emperour of Rome Claudius
Ne him byforn þe Romain Galien
Ne dorste neuer be so coragius
Ne non Ermyne ne non Egipcien
Ne Surrien ne non arabien
Wiþinne þe feeld þat dorste with hire fight
Lest þat sche wolde hem wiþ hir handes sleen
Or with hire meyne putten hem to flight

[IN kynges/ abite wente hir/ sones/ two .] [Harl. MS 1758, leaf 187, back]
As Eyres of here regnes alle
And hermanno and Thymalao
Here names were as Perciens hem calle
But ay fortune haþ ay in hir hony galle
This mighty queene may no while en-dure
ffortune out of hire regne made hire falle
To wrecchednes and to mysauenture

¶ Aurelion whan þat þe gouernance
Of Rome cam in-to his handes tweye
he schoop vpon þis queen to do vengañce
And wiþ his legiouns he took his weye
Toward Cenobye and schortly for to seye
He made hir flee and at þe last hir bent
And fetered hire and eek hir children tweye
And wan þe lond and home to Rome þey went

¶ Among þese oþer þinges þat he wan
hire char þat was wiþ gold wrought and perre
This grete Romayn þis aurelian
Haþ wiþ him ladde for þat men schulde se
Byforn his tryumphe walkeþ sche
Wiþ gilte cheynes on hire necke hangyng
Corouned sche was as after hire degre
And ful of perre charged hire cloþing

¶ Allas fortune sche þat' whilom was
Dredful to kynges and to emperoures · [leaf 241, back]
Now gaureþ al þe poeple on hire allas ·
And sche þat' helmed was in starke stoures · 3560
And wan by force townes strong' and toures ·
Schal on hire heede were a vytremyte
And sche þat' bar þe septre ful of' floures
Schal bere a distaff' hir costes for to quyte 3564

[*Peter the Cruel, of Spain.*]

[1]¶ O noble o worþy petre glorie of' Spayne ¶ De Petro Spayne
Whom fortune helde so heyh in mageste ¶ Rege
Wel oughte men þin pitous deþ complayne [1 *wrongly markt* b *in margin, by a later corrector, to follow* a (De nero &c).
Thy bastard broþer made þe to fle
And after at a sege by subtilte
þow were betrayed and lad to his tent' 3570
Wher as he wiþ his owen hand slough þe
Succedyng' in þy regne and in þin rent' 3572

¶ The feeld of' snow wiþ þe egle blak' þer-Inne ¶ Bertheun Claykyn
Caught' wiþ þe lymrodde coloures as þe gledes ¶ Olyuer Mawny
he brew þis cursednes and al þe synne
The wicked neste was werker of' þis needes [*Bertrand du Guesclin, & his cousin Sir Oliver de Mauny*, l. 3579.]
Nought Charles Olyuer þat' ay took' god heede
Of' trouþe and honour but of' armerekke 3578
Genyloun Olyuer corupte for meede
Broughtest' þis worþi king' in such a brekke 3580

[*Peter of Cyprus.*]

¶ Worþy Petre king' of' Cypre also ¶ De petro regis ¶ Cypri
þat' alisaundre wan by heigh maystrie
fful many an heþen wroughtest' þou ful wo
Of' which þin owen liege had enuye 3584
And for no þing' but' for þin Chiualrie
They in þin bedde han slayn þe by þe morwe
Thus gan fortune gouerne and gye
And out' of' ioye bringe men in-to sorwe 3588

[*Bernabo Visconti, of Milan.*]

¶ Of' Melane gret' barnabo viscounte ¶ De Barnabo vicecom*ite* ¶ Mediolano /
God of' delite and scourge of' lumbardye
Why schulde nouȝt' I þin fortune acounte /
Seþþen in estaat' þou clombe were so hihe 3592
Thin broþer sone þat' was þin double allye
ffor he þin neuew was and sone in lawe [leaf 242]
Wiþinne his prisoñ made þe to deye
But why ne how wot' I þat' þou were slawe // 3596

[*Ugolino, Count of Pisa.*]

¶ Of' þe erl hugelyne of' Pyse þe langour ¶ De hugylyn*o* Comit*e* Pisano.
Ther may no tunge telle for pite
But' lytel out' of' pyse stant' a toure
In which toure in prisoñ putte was he 3600
And wiþ him ben his litel children þre
The eldest' skarsly .v. ȝer was of' age
allas fortune it' was gret' cruelte
Suche briddes for to putte in such a kage 3604

¶ Dampned he was to deyen in þat prisoñ
ffor Roger which þat' bisschop was of' pyse
Hadde on him maade a fals suggestioñ
Thurgħ which þe poeple gan on him aryse 3608
And putten him to prysoñ in swich wyse
As ȝe haue herde and mete and drynk' he hadde
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
And þ*er*-wiþ-al it' was ful pore and badde 3612

¶ And on a day bifell*e* þat' in þat oure
Whan þat' his mete was wont' to be brougħt'
The Gailler schutte þe dores of' þe toure
He herde it wel but' he saugh it nougħt' 3616
And in his herte anon þer felle a þougħt
þat' þey for hunger wolde don him deyen
Allas q*uod* he allas þat' I was wrougħt'
þer-wiþ þe teeres felle fro his eyen 3620

¶ his ȝonge sone þat' þre ȝeer was of' age
vnto him sayde fader why do ȝe wepe
When wil þe Gaylere bringen oure potage
Is þer no morsel bred þat' ȝe do kepe
I am so hungry þat' I may nought' slepe
Now wolde god þat I might' slepen euer
Thanne schulde non hunger in my wombe crepe
þer nys no þing' sauf' bred þat me were leuer

¶ Thus day by day þis childe gan to crye
Til in his fadres barme a doun it lay
And sayde fare wel fader I mot' deye [leaf 242, back]
And kissed his fader and deyde þe same day
And whan þe woful fader ded him say
ffor wo his armes tuo he gan to byte /
And sayde allas fortune and welaway
Thyn fals wheel my wo I may al wyte

¶ His children wende þat' it' for hunger was
þat' he his armes gnowe and nought for wo
And sayde fader do nouȝt' so allas
But' raþer ete þe fleissch vpon ous tuo
Oure fleissch þou ȝaf' vs take oure flessch vs fro
And ete ynough right' þus to him þay sayde /
And after þat' wiþinne a day or tuo
They leyde hem doun right' in his lappe and deyde /

Himself' dispeyred eek' for hunger starf'
Thus ended is þe mighty erl of' Pyse.
ffro heih estate fortune fro him karf'
Of' þis tregetrye it' ought' ynough suffise/
Who so wol heere it' in a lenger wise
Redeþ þe grete poete of' ytayle /
That' highte daunte for he can it' deuyse
ffro poynt' to poynt' nouȝt' o word wol he fayle

[*Nero.*]

¶ Al þough þat Nero was as vicious — De nero
As eny feend þat lip ful lowe adoun — [1 *wrongly markt* a. *by a later corrector, to go before Peter of Spain.*]
3et he as telleþ vs Swetheneus :
This wilde world haþ in Subiecciou*n*
Boþe Est and west and Septe*m*ptriou*n*
Of Rubies Saphires and of perlis wliite
Were alle his cloþes brouded vp and doun
ffor he in ge*m*mes grete gan delyte

¶ More delicate more pompous of array
More proud was neuer emp*er*our þan he
þat ilke cloþ þat he had wered a day
After þat tyme he nolde it neuer se
Nettes of golde þred hadde he gret plente
To fissche in Tybre when him leste to pleye
his lustes were as lawe in his degre [leaf 243]
ffor fortune as his freende wolde him obeye

¶ He Rome brente for his delicacye
The senatoures he slough vpon a day
To heere how þat men wolde weepe and crye
And slough his broþer and by his suster lay
His mooder made he in pitous aray
ffor he hire wombe slitte to byholde
Where he consceyued was so weylaway
þat he so litel of his moder tolde

¶ No teere out of his eyhen for þat sight
Ne came but sayde a fair wo*m*man was sche
Gret wonder is þat he couþe or might
Be domesman of hire ded beute
The wyn to brynge þo comanded he
And drank anon . non o*þer* wo he made /
Whan might is ioygned vnto cruelte
Allas to deepe wole þe venym wade

¶ In ȝouþe a mayster hadde þis emperour
To teche him lettrure and curtesye.
ffor of moralite he was þe flour
As in his tyme but if bookes lye
And whiles his mayster hadde of him maystrye
He made him so konnyng and so souple /
That longe tyme it was or tyrannye.
Or any vice dorste in him vncouple

¶ This Seneka of which I deuyse
By cause nero hadde of him such drede
ffor he for vices wolde him chastise
Discretly as by word and nought by drede
Sire wolde he sayn an Emperour moot needе
Be vertuous and hate tyrauntrye
ffor which he him in bathe made to blede
In boþe his armes til he moste dye

¶ This nero hadde eek of a costummance
In ȝouþe aȝeins his mayster for to ryse
Which aftirward him þought a gret greuaunce [leaf 243, back]
Therfore he made him deye in þis wise
But naþeles þis Seneke þe wise /
Chees in a bathe to deye in þis manere /
Raþer þan han anoþer tormentrye
And þus haþ Nero slayn his mayster deere

¶ Now felle it so þat fortune lust no lenger
þe heihe pryde of nero to cherissche
ffor þough he were strong ȝet was sche strenger
Sche þought þus by god I am to nyse
To setten a man þat is fulfilde of vice
In heigh degre and emperour him calle
By god out of his sete I wol him tryce
When he lest weneþ sonnest schal he falle

¶ The poeple ros vpon him on a nigħt
ffor his defaute and whan he it aspyed
Out of his dores anon he haþ him digħt
Allone and þer he wende han ben allyed
he knokked faste and ay þe more he cryed
þe faster schutten þey þe dores alle
Tho wiste he wel he hadde himself begyled
And went his way no lenger dorste he calle /

¶ The poeple cryed and rombled vp and doun
þat wiþ his eeres herde he how þey sayde
Wher is þis false tyraunt þis Neroun
ffor fere almost out of his witte a brayde
And to his goddes pitously he sayde
ffor socour but it mighte nought betyde
ffor drede of þis him þoughte þat he deyde
and ran in to a gardyn him to huyde

¶ And in þis gardyn fond he cherles tweye
And saten by a fuyre ful grete and rede
And to þe cherles twey he gan to preye
To slen him and to gurden of his hede
That to his body whan þat he were dede
Were no despite y-done for his deffame /
Himself he slough he coupe no better reed
Of which fortune lough and hadde a game

[*Holofernes.*]

¶ Was neuer Capitayn vnder a king ¶ De Oliphe
þat regnes mo putte in subiecciou*n*
Ne strenger was in feeld of alle þing
As in his tyme ne gretter of Renou*n*
Ne more pompous in heigħ p*re*sumpciou*n*
Then Olyferne which fortune ay keste /
So likerously and ladde him vp and doun
Til *þat* he hed was er *þat* he wiste /

¶ Nought oonly þat þis world had of him awe /
ffor lesyng of Richesse and liberte
But he made euery man reneye his lawe /
Nabugodonosor was lord sayde
Non oþer god schulde honoured be
Aȝeins his heste no wight dar trespace /
Saue in Bethulya a strang Cite
Where Elyachim a prest was of þat place

¶ But take keepe of þe deþ of Olypherne
Amydde his hoste he drunke lay a nyght
Wiþinne his tente large as is a berne /
And ȝet for alle his pompe and alle his might
Iudith a womman as he lay vpright
Slepyng his heed of smot and fro his tent /
fful pryuyly sche stal fro euery wight
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

[*Antiochus.*]

¶ What needeþ it of king antiochus
To telle his heihe and real mageste
his heighe pruyde his werkes venymous
ffor such anoþer nas neuer non as he
Redeþ which þat he was in Machabe
And redeþ þe proude wordes þat he sayde
And why he felle fro his prosperite
And in an hulle how wrecchedly he deyde

¶ ffortune him hadde enhaunced so in pruyde
þat verrayly he wende he mighte atteyne
vnto þe sterres vpon euery syde
And in a balaunce to weye vche mountayne / [leaf 244, back]
And alle þe floodes of þe see restreyne
And goddes poeple hadde he most in hate
Hem wolde he sle in torment and peyne /
Wenyng þat god ne might his pruyde abate

¶ De antiochio illustri.

¶ And for þat' Nichamour and Thymothee
Wiþ Iewes were venquyscht' mightily
Vnto þe Iewes swich an hate hadde he'
That' he hadde greythed his chaar ful hastily
And swor and sayde ful dispitously
vnto Ier*usa*lem he wolde eft' sone /
To wreke his Ire on hit' ful cruelly
But' of' his purpos he was lette ful sone /

¶ God for his manace him so sore smot/
Wiþ inuisible wounde ay vncurable/
That' in his guttes karf' so and bote
That' his peynes were importable
And certeynly þe wreche was resonable
ffor many mannes guttes dede he payne
But' fro his pourpos cursed and dampnable
ffor alle his smerte he nolde him nought' restreyne

¶ But' bad anon apparaylen his Oste
And sodeinly er he was of' hit/ ware
God daunted alle his pruyde and alle his boste
ffor he so sore felle out' of' his chare
That' hurt' his lymes and his skyn totare
So þat' he ne mighte go ne ryde
But' in a Chayer men aboute him bare
Al forbrused boþe bak' and syde

¶ The wreche of' god him smot' so cruelly
That' in his body wickede wormes crepte
And þer-wiþ-al he stank' so orribly
That' non of alle his meigne þat him kepte /
Wheþer so þat' he wook' or elles slepte /
Ne mighte nought/ þe stynk' of' him endure
In þis meschief' he weyled and eek' wepte /
And knewe god lord of' eu*er*y creature [leaf 245]

¶ To alle his host and to himself also ·
fful wlatsom was þe stynke of þis Careyne
No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro
And in his stynke and in his horible peyne.
He starf ful wrecchedly in a mounteyne
Thus haþ þis robbour and þis homicide
That many a man made to weepe and pleyne
Such guerdoñ as bilongeþ vnto pruyde /

[*Alexander the Great.*]

¶ The story of alisaundre is so commune
That euery wight þat haþ discrecioun
haþ herd somwhat or al of his fortune
This wilde world as in conclusioun
He wan by strengþe or for his heigh renoun
They weren glad for pees vnto him sende
The pruyde of man and beste he leyde a doun
Wher so he cam vnto þe worldes ende

¶ De alexandro magno philippi Regis Macedonie filio.

¶ Comparisoñ might neuer ȝit/ be maked
Betwix him and anoþer conquerour
ffor alle þis worlde for drede of him haþ quaked
he was of knighthede and of fredam flour
ffortune him made þe heier of hure honour
Saue wyn and wommen no þing might aswage /
His heihe entent in armes and labour
So was he fulle of louynge corage

¶ What pite were it to him þey I ȝou tolde
Of darius and an .C. þousand mo
Of kinges princes dukes eerles bolde
Which he conquered and brouȝt hem in-to woo
I say as fer as man may ryde or goo
þe worlde was his what schulde I more deuyse
ffor þoughñ I write or tolde ȝou euermo
Of his knighthode he mighte nought suffise

¶ Twelf' ȝeer he regned as saiþ Machabe
Philippes sone of' Macedo he was /
That' first' was king' of' Grece þe Contre /
O worþy gentil alisandre allas [leaf 245, back] 3848
þat' euer schulde falle such a caas
Enpoysoned of' þin folk' þou were
þyn. S fortune haþ torned in-to an aas
And ȝet' for þe ne weep sche neuer a tere 3852

¶ Who schal men ȝeue teeres to compleyne
The deþ of' gentilesse and of' fraunchise
þat' alle þe world weeldid in his demeygne /
And ȝet' him þoughte it' might' not suffise / 3856
So ful was his corage of' heigh emprise
Allas who schal me helpe to endite
ffals fortune and poysoñ to despise
þe whiche tuo of' al þis wo I wite 3860

[*Julius Cæsar.*]

¶ By wisedom manhede and by labour ¶ De Iulio Cesare.
ffro humbleheed and fro Royal mageste
vp ros he Iulius þe Conquer*our*
That alle þe Occident by land and fee 3864
By strengþe of hand or elles by tretee
And vnto Rome made hem tributarie
And seþenes of' Rome þemp*er*our was he
Til þat' fortune wax his adu*er*sarie 3868

¶ O mighty Cesar þat' in Tessalye
Aȝens Pompeus fader þin in lawe
That' of' þe Orient' hadde al þe chiualrye
as ferre as þat' þe day begynneþ dawe 3872
þou þorugh þin knighthode þou hast' hem take and slawe /
Saue fewe folk' þat' wiþ Pompeus fledde /
þurgh which þou puttest' al þe Orient in awe
Thanke fortune þat' so wel þe spedde 3876

¶ But now a litel while I wol bewayle /
þis Pompeus þis noble gouernour
Of' Rome which þat' fleigh at' þis batayle
I say on of' his men a fals traytour
His heed of' smoot/ to wynne him fauour
Of' Iulius and him þe heed broughte
Allas Pompeye of' þe Orient' conqueror
That fortune vnto such a finye broughte [leaf 246]

¶ To Rome a3ein repayreþ Iulius
Wiþ his triumphe laureate ful hey3e
But' on a tyme Brutus Cassius
That' euer had of' his heigh estaat' enuye
ffil priuily had maad conspiracie
A3eins þis Iulius in subtil wise
And caste þe place in which he schulde deye
Wiþ boydekynnes as I schal 3ou deuyse

¶ þis Iulius to þe Capithole went
vppon a day as he was wont' to goon
And in þe Capitolye anon him hent'
This false brutus on his foule foon
And stiked him wiþ boydekynnes anon
Wiþ many a wounde and þus þey leet/ him lye
But' neuer gronte he at' no stroke but oon
Or elles at' tuo but' if' his story lye

¶ So manly was þis Iulius of' herte
And so wel loued estaatly honeste
That' þough his dedly woundes so sore smerte
His mantel ouer his hepes caste he
ffor noman schulde seen his priuyte
And as he lay as deyinge in a traunce
And wiste verrily þat' deed was he
Of' honeste 3et' hadde he remembrance

¶ Lucane to þis story I recomende
And to Swetoñ and to Valerius also
That' of þis story writeþ word and ende
how þat' þese grete conqueroures tuo
ffortune was ferst' freend and siþen a foo
No man ne truste vpon his fauour longe
But' haue hire in awayte for eueremo
Witnesse on alle þise conqueroures stronge

[*Cresus.*]

¶ This riche Cresus whilom king' of lyde
Of' whiche Cresus Cyquus sore him dradde
3et' was he caught' amyddes alle his pryde
And to be brent' men to þe fuyre him ladde
But' such a reyn doun fro þe walken schadde
þat' slough̃ þe fuyr and made him to askape
But' to be war 3et' no *grace* he hadde
Til fortune on þe galwes made him gape

¶ Whan he askaped was he can not' stynte
ffor to begynne a newe reyne a3ein
he wende wel for þat' fortune him sente
Such happe þat' he escaped þurgh þe rayn
That' of' his foos he mighte not' be slayn
And swich a swefne vppan a night' he mette
Of which he was so proud and eek' so fayn
That' in vengaunce he alle his herte sette

¶ Vpon a tree he was as þat' him þoughte
There Iubit*er* him wisshe boþe halse and syde
And Phebus eek' a fair towayle him broughte
To druye him wiþ and *per*fore wax his pryde
And to his doughter þat stood him besyde
Which þat' he knew in heigh sentence abounde
He bad hire telle him what' it' signefyed
And sche his dreemes bygan right' þus expounde

¶ The tree q*uod* sche þe galwes is to mene
And Iubiter bitokneþ snow and rayn
And Phebus wiþ his towayle so clene
Tho be þe sonne stremes for to sayn
Thou schalt' an honged be fader certayn
Reyn schal þe waissche and sonne schal þe druye
þus warned him ful platte and ful playn
His doughter þat' called was Phanye /

¶ An honged was Cresus þe proude king'
His roial trone might' him nought auayle
Tegedie is non o*þer* man*er* þing'
Ne can synnynge crye ne by-wayle
But' þat' fortune alway wol assayle /
Wiþ vnwar strook' þe regnes that' ben proude
ffor whan men trusteþ hire þan wol sche fayle
And couere hire brighte face wiþ a cloude [leaf 247]

¶ Explic*it*/

¶ Here begynneþ þe prologe of' þe nonne prestes tale
[on leaf 247]

HO quod þe knigħt' goode sire nomore of' þis
þat' ȝe han sayde is right' ynough ywis
And meche more for litel heuynesse
Is right' ynough to meche folk' as I gesse / [no gap in the Corpus MS] 3960
[I sey for me. it' is a grete disease [MS Reg. 17 D. xv, lf 273, bk]
Where as men han bien. in grete welth and ease
To here of' theyr sodayn falle alas
And the contrary is Ioy. and grete solas 3964
And whan a man hath bien in pouer estate
And clymbith vp. and wexith fortunate
And ther abydith · in prosperite [leaf 274]
Swiche thyng' is gladsom. as it' thynkyth me 3968
And of' swiche thynges. were goodely for to telle
Ya quod oure host'. be seynt' poulis belle
Ye say right soth. this monk' be clappid lowde
He spak' how fortune. was couered with a clowde 3972
I not' neuer what'. and als of' a tregedye
Right' now ye herd. and parde no remedye
Is it' for to be-wailen. and compleyn
That'. that' is don. and als it' is a peyn 3976
As ye have sayd'. to here of' hevynesse
Sir monke nomore of' this. so god' yow blisse
Yowre tale anoyeth. al this company
Swiche thyng' is nat' worth a boterflye] [MS Reg. extract ends]
ȝoure tales don vs no desport' ne game
Wherfore sir monk' Doun Pieres by ȝour name
I pray ȝou hertely telle vs som what' elles
ffor siker nere clynkyng' of' ȝoure belles / 3984

þat' on 3oure brydel hangeþ on eu*e*ry syde /
By heuene king' þat' for vs alle dyde
I schal for þis falle doun for slepe /
Al þough þe slough hadde neuer ben so depe
þan hadde 3oure tale be told in vayn
ffor certeinly as þese clerkes sayn
Wher as a man may han non audience
Nought' helpeþ it to tellen his sentence
And wel I woot' þe substañce is in me /
If' eny þing' schal wel reported be
Sire say somwhat' of' huntyng' I 3ou p*r*ay
Nay q*uod* þe monk' I haue no lust' to play
Now lete anoþ*er* telle as I haue tolde
þanne spak' oure Ost' wiþ ruyde speche and bolde
And sayde vnto þe nonnes prest' anon
Come ner sire prest' com hider s*ir* Iohn
Telle vs such þing' as may oure hertes glade
Be mery þough þou ryde vpon a Iade /
What' þough þin hors be hagged foul or lene
If' he wol serue þe rekke þe nought' a bene
Loke þat' þin herte be mery euermo
3is Ost' q*uod* he so mote I ryde or go
But' I be mery I-wys I wil be blamed
And right' anon he haþ his tale tamed
And þus he seyde to vs eu*e*rychon
This swete prest' þis goode man s*ir* Iohn . ¶ Explicit *prologus*

Ca^{m} xxij^{m}

¶ Here begynneþ þe nonnes prestes tale of^{t} þe kokke & his vij. hennes

A Pouere wydewe somdel stope in age [leaf 247, back]
Was whilom dwellyng^{t} in a narwe cotage 4012
Besydes a groue standyng^{t} in a dale
This wydewe of^{t} which I telle ȝou my tale
Seþins þilke day þat^{t} sche was last/ a wyf^{t}
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf^{t} 4016
ffor litel was hire catelle and hire rent
By housbondrye of^{t} such as god hire sent^{t}
Sche fand hire self^{t} and eek^{t} hire doughtren tuo
þre large sowes hadde sche and nomo 4020
Thre kyn and eek^{t} a scheep þat^{t} highte malle
ffful sooty was hire bour and eek^{t} hire halle
In which sche eet^{t} ful many a sklender mel
Of^{t} poynañt^{t} Sause hire needed neuer a del 4024
No deynte morsell passed hire þrote
Hire dyete was acordañt to hire cote
Replecioñ ne made hire neuere seeke
A-tempree diete was alle hire Phiseke 4028
And excersise and hertes suffisañce
The gowte letted hire no þing^{t} to daunce
Ne Poplexie ne schente not hire heed
No wyn ne drank^{t} sche neyþer whit ne reed 4032
Hire bord was serued most^{t} wiþ whit and blak
Milk^{t} and brown breed in which sche fond no lak
Seynd bacoñ and somtyme an ey or tweye
ffor sche was as it^{t} was a maner deye 4036
A gardyn sche hadde enclosed alle aboute
Wiþ stikkes and a druye diche wiþoute
In which sche hadde a cokk^{t} þat^{t} highte Chaunteclere
In alle þe land of^{t} crowyng^{t} nas his peere 4040

his voys was merier þan þe mery Orgon
On masse dayes þat' in þe chirche gon
Wel sikerer was þe crowyng' in his logge
þan is a clokke or eny abbay orlogge
By nature he knew eche assencioñ
Of' equinoxial of' þilke toun
ffor whan degrees .xv. were discendid [leaf 248]
þenne knew he þat' it' might nought ben amended
His cambe was redder þen þe fyn coralle
And batailled as it' were a castel walle
Ylike asure were his legges and his toon
His byle was blak' and as þe Iet' it' schon
His nayles whitter þen þe lily flour
And ylike burnyssch't' gold was his colour
This gentil cokke hadde in his gouernance /
.vij. hennes for to doon his plesañce
Whiche weren his sustres and his paramoures
And wonder ylike to him as of' coloures
Of' which þe fairest' hewed on þe þrote
Was cleped faire damisel pertelote
Curteys sche was discret' and debonaire
And companable / and bar hire self' so faire
Siþens þilke day þat' sche was seuenyght olde
þat' trewely sche haþ þe herte in holde
Of' chaunteclere loken in euery liþ
He loued hire so þat' wel was him þerwith
But' such a ioye as it' was to heere hem synge
Whan þat' þe brighte sonne gan to springe
In swete acorde my leef' is fare in londe /
ffor þilke tyme as I haue vnderstonde
Beestes and briddes couþe speke and synge
And so bifelle þat' in a dawenynge /
As Chaunteclere among' his wyfes alle
Satte on his perche þat' was in þe halle
And next' him sat' þis faire Pertelote
þis Chaunteclere gan gronen in his þrote

As a man þat' is in his dreme drecched sore
And when þat' Pertelote þus herde him rore
Sche was agast/ and sayde herte deere
What' eyleþ 3ou to grone in þis manere
3e ben a verray sleper fy for schame /
And he answerde and sayde þus ma dame /
I pray 3ou þat' 3e take it not' to greef' [leaf 248, back]
By god me mette þat' I was in such mescheef'
Right' now þat' 3et myn herte is sore afright'
Now quod he my sweuene reed aright'
And keepe my body out' of' foul prisoun
Me mette þat' I romed vp and doun
Wiþinne oure 3erde wher as I saugh a beeste
Was lik' an hound and wolde han made areste /
vpon my body and wolde han had me deed
His colour was betwixe whit' and reed
And tipped was his tail and boþe his eeres
Wiþ blak' vnlik' þe remenant of' his heeres
his snowte smal with glowyng' eyen tweye
3et' of' his look' for feer almost' I deye
This caused me my gronyng' douteles
Avoy quod sche // ffy on 3ou herteles
Allas quod sche ffor by þat' god aboue
Now haue 3e lost' myn herte and al my loue
I can nought' loue a coward by my feiþ
ffor certes what' so eny womman seiþ
We wolle alle desyren if' it mighte be
To haue housbondes hardy wise and fre
And secre ne no nyggard ne no fool
Ne him þat' is agast' of' euery tool
Ne non auauntour by þat' god aboue
How dorste 3e say for schame vnto 3oure loue /
That' eny þing' might' make 3ou aferd [1 *not in* Reg. 18 C 2, *if* 228]
Han 3e no mannes herte and han a berd
Allas and konne 3e be agast' of' sweuons
[Nothyng' god wote. but vanite in sweuene is[1]] [Reg. 17 D xv, *leaf* 276]

Sweuenes engendren of replexiones [1 *not in* Reg. 18 C 2]
[And oft of synne. and of complexiouns [1]] [MS Reg. 17 D xv]
When humo*ur*s ben to habundaunt in a wight
Certes þis dreme which 3e han herd to nyght
Cometh of þe grete su*per*fluite
Of 3oure reede colre sire pa*r*de
Which causeþ folk to dremen here dreemes
Of arwes and of fuyre with reede leemes
Of reede bestes þat woln hem byte [leaf 249]
Of Contelle and of whelpes grete an lyte
Right as he humour malencolie
Causeþ many a man in slepe to crye
ffor feere of beres and of boles blake
Or elles blake deueles woln hem take
Of oþer humours couþe I telle also
þat worken many a man in sleep ful woo
But I wol passe as lightly as I can
Lo Catoñ which þat was so wys a man
Sayde he nou3t þus ne do no force of dremes
Now sire q*uod* sche whan we flee fro þe beemes
ffor goddes loue as takeþ som laxatif
Vp p*er*il of my soule and of my lyf
I counceile 3ou þe beste I wol not lye
þat boþe of colre and of malencolye
3e purge 3ou and for 3e schuln nought tary
þough þat in þis toun is non apotecary
I schal my self to herbes techen 3ou
That schal ben 3oure hele and 3oure prow
And in þe gardyn þo herbes schal I fynde
The whiche han of here p*ro*prete by kynde
To purgen 3ou byneþe and eek aboue
ffor3eteþ nou3t þis for goddes owne loue
3e ben ful Colrik of Compleccioñ
Were þe sonne in his ascencioñ
Ne fynde 3ou replete and 3oure humors hote
and if it do I dar wel leye a groote

That' ȝe schuln haue a feuer terciane
Or an agu þat' may ben ȝoure bane
A day or tuo ȝe schuln haue digestyues
Of' wormes er ȝe take ȝoure laxatyues
Of' laureole Centure and of' fumytere
Or ellis of' Ellebore þat' groweþ þere
Of' Catapuce or of' gaytres buryes
Of' herbe yue growyng' in oure ȝerde þer mery is
Pek' hem vp righ̄t' as þey growe and et' hem In [leaf 249, back]
Be mery housbande for ȝoure fadres kyn
Dredeþ no dreem I can say ȝou no more
Ma dame *quod* he gramercy of' ȝoure lore
But' naþeles as touching' dann Cato*u*n
That' haþ of' wisdom such a gret' reno*u*n
By god men may in olde bookes reede
Oon of' þe grettest' auctour out' of' drede
Of' many a man more of' auctorite
þenne euer Caton̄ was so mote I þe
That' alle þe reuers sein of' his sentence
And han wel founden by exp*e*rience
þat' dreemes ben significacioñs
As wel of' ioye as of' tribulac*i*ons
þat' folk' enduren in þis lyf' p*re*sent
Ther needeþ nouȝt' to make of' þis non argument'
The verray preef' scheweþ it in dede
On of' þe grettest' auctour þat' men rede
Saiþ þus þat' whilom tuo felawes went
On pylgrimage in a ful good entent'
And happed so þey camen in-to a toun
Wher as þer was such congregacioñ
Of' poeple and eek' of' streigh̄t' herburgage
That' þey ne fand as moche as a cotage /
In which þey boþe migh̄t' y-logged be
Wherfore þey mosten of' necessite
As for þat' nigh̄t' departe of' companye
And vche of' hem goþ vnto his ostelrye

And took' his loggynge as it' wolde falle
That' oon of' hem was logged in a stalle
fferre in a ȝerde wiþ oxen of' þe plough
þat' oþer man was logged wel ynough 4188
As was his aduenture or his fortune
þat' vs gouerneþ alle as in comune
And so bifelle it' lange er it was day
þis man mette in his bedde *þer* as he lay 4192
how þat' his felaw gan on him to calle [leaf 250]
And sayde allas for in an oxe stalle
This night' schal I be mourdred þer I lye
Now help me deere broþer er I dye 4196
In alle haste come to me he seyde
This man out' of' his sleep for feere abrayde
But' whan þat' he was wakened out' of' his slepe
he turned him and tok' of' þis no kepe / 4200
Him þought' his dreem was nought/ but' vanyte
þus twyes in his sleping' dremed he
And at' þe þridde tyme ȝet' his felawe
Came as him þought' I am now y-slawe 4204
Byholde my bloody woundes deepe and wyde /
Arys vp erely in þe morne tyde /
And at' þe west' gate of' þe toun *quod* he
A carte fulle of' dunge þere schalt' þou se / 4208
In which my body is hidde ful pryuyly
Do þilke carte aresten boldely
My golde caused my murdre soþ to sayn
And tolde him euery poynt' how he was slayn 4212
Wiþ a ful pitous face pale of' hewe
And truste wel his dreem he fand ful trewe
ffor on þe morwe as sone as it' was day
To his felawes In he tok' þe way 4216
And whan he com vnto þis Oxe stalle
After his felawe he bigan to calle
The Ostiler answered him anon
And sayde sire ȝoure felawe is y-gon 4220

As sone as day he wente out' of' þe toun
This man gan falle in gret' suspecioñ
Remembryng' on his dreemes þat' he mette
And forþ he goþ no lenger wolde he lette
Vnto þe west' gate of' þe toun and fonde
A dung' carte as he wente to dunge þe londe /
þat' was arrayed in þe same wyse
As ȝe han herde þe deede man deuyse
And wiþ an hardy herte he gan to crye [leaf 250, back]
Vengaunce and Iustice of' þis felonye
My felawe murdred is þis same nigħt
And in þis cart' he lyþ gapyng' vpright'
[I Crie oute on þe mynistris quod he [MS Harl. 7333 (Shirley's), *leaf* 113, *col.* 1. *Not in* Sloane 1685, *leaf* 217, *back; or in* Sloane 1686, *leaf* 285.]
þat shulde kepe and rewle þis citee
Harrow allas here liþ my felaw slayn
What shuld I more vn-to this tale sayn
þe peple out sterte / & caste þe carte to grounde
And in the medil of the donge þei founde] [Harl. *extract ends*]
The deede man þat' murdred was al newe
O blisful god þat' art' so iuste and trewe /
Lo how þat' þou bywreyest' murdre alway
Murdre wole out' þat' se we day by day
Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable
To god þat' is so iuste and resonable
That' he wol not' suffre it' hiled be
They it' abyde a ȝeer or tuo or þre
Mordre wole out' þis is my conclusioñ
And right' anon ministres of' þe toun
And hente þe cartere and sore him pyned
And eek' þe osteller so ferre engyned
That þey beknewe here wickednesse anon
And weren hanged by þe nekke boon
Heer may men see þat' dreemes ben to drede
And certes in þe same book' I rede
Right' in þe nexte chapitre I rede of' þis
I gabbe nought/ so haue I ioye & blis

Tuo men þat wolde han passed þe see
ffor certein cause in-to a ferre cuntre
If þat þe wynde nad y-be contrary
þat made hem in a Cite for to tary
That stood ful mery vpon an hauen side
But on a day aȝens þe euen tyde
The wynd gan chaunge and blowen as him leste
Iolyf and glad þey wenten vnto reste
And casten hem ful erly for to seyle
But herkne þat oo man felle in gret *pereyle*
That oon of hem in slepyng as he lay
Him mette a wonder dreme aȝeins þe day
Him þoght a man stood by his beddes syde
And him comänded þat he schulde abyde
And seyde him þus if þou to morwe wende [leaf 251]
Thou schalt be dreynt my tale is at an ende
he awook and tolde his felawe what he mette
and prayed him his viage for to lette
As for þat day he prayde him to abyde
his felawe þat lay by his beddes syde
Gan for to laughe and scorned him ful faste
No dreme q*uod* he may myn herte agaste
þat I wol lette for to do my þinges
I sette nouȝt a straw by þy dremynges
ffor sweuenes ben but vanytes and Iapes
Men dreme alway of owles and of apes
And of many a mase þer-wiþ-all
Men dremen of þing þat neuer was ne schal
But siþenes I se þat þou wolt here abyde
And þus forslowþen wilfully þe tyde
God wot it rewþ me and haue good day
And thus he took his leeue and went his way
And er þat he hadde half his cours y-sayled
Not I nought why ne what meschaunce it ayled
But casuelly þe schippes botme rent
And schip and man vnder þe water went

In sight' of' oþer schippes him besyde
þat' wiþ him seyled at' þe same tyde
And þerfore he seyde Pertelote so deere
By suche ensamples olde maist' þou leere
þat' no man schulde be to recheles
Of' dremes for I say þe dowteles
That' many a dreem fol sore is for to drede
Lo in þe lyf' of' Seint' kenelme I rede
þat' was kenulphes sone þe noble king'
Of' Mertenrike how kenelme met' a þing'
A litel er was murdred on a day
His murdre in his avisioñ he say
His norice him expouned eury del
His sweuene and bad him for to kepe him wel
ffor tresoñ but' he was seuen 3eer old [leaf 251, back]
And þerfore litel tale haþ he told
Of' eny dreem so holly was his herte
By god I hadde leuer þan my scherte
þat' 3e hadde herde his legende as haue I
Dame pertelote I say 3ou trewely
Macrobeus þat' writ' þe avisioun
In affryke of' þe worþy Cyprioun
Affermeþ dremes and saiþ þat' þay ben
Warnyng' of' þinges þat' men after seen
And furþermore I pray 3ou lokeþ wel
þe olde testament of' Daniel
If' he heeld dreemes of' any vanyte
Reede eek' of' Ioseph and þer schuln 3e see
Wheþer dremes ben som tyme I say not' alle
Warnyng' of' þinges þat' schuln after falle
Loke of' Egypt' þe king' Daun Pharao
His baker and his botiler also
Wher þey ne felten noon effecte in dremes
Who so wol seche þe acte of' sondry Remes
May rede of' dreemes many a wonder þing'
Lo Cresus which þat' was of' lyde king'

Mette he nouȝt þat he sat on a tree
Which signified he schulde anhanged be
Lo here adromacha Ectores wiff
That day þat Ector schulde lese his lyff
Sche dreemed on þe same night byforn
How þat þe lyff of Ector schulde be lorn
If þilke day he went in-to Batayle
Sche warned him but it might nouȝt auayle
He wente for to feighten neuer þe les
But he was slayn of oon achilles
But þilke tale is al to long to telle
And eek it is neigh day I may nouȝt dwelle
Schortly I say as for conclusioñ
þat I schal haue of þis auisioñ
Of aduersitees and I say forþermore [leaf 252]
That I nel telle of laxatifs no store
ffor þey ben venymous I wot right wel
I hem diffye I loue hem neuer a del
Now let vs speke of myrþe and stynte al þis
Madame pertelote so haue I blis
Of o þing god me haþ sent large grace
ffor when I se þe beaute of ȝour face
ȝe ben so skarlet reed aboute ȝoure eyen
It makeþ alle my drede for to deyen
ffor al so siker as In principio
Mulier est hominis confusio
Ma dame þe sentence of þis latyn is
Womman is mannes ioye and al his blys
ffor whan I feele a night ȝoure softe syde
Al be it þat I may nought on ȝou ryde
ffor þat oure perche is maad so narwe allas
I am so fulle of ioye and solas
That I diffye boþe sweuen and dreem
And wiþ þat word he fleigh doun fro þe beem
ffor it was day and eek his hennes alle
And wiþ a chukke he gan hem for to calle

ffor he had founde a corn lay in þe ȝerde
Real he was nomore aferde
He feþerede *per*telote twenty tyme
And tradde as ofte er it were *prime* 4368
He lokeþ as it' were a grym lyo*un*
And on his toos he romed vp and do*un*
Him deygned nouȝt' to sette his feet' on grounde
Ay chukked he whan he hadde a corn y-founde 4372
And to him þanne ranne his wyfes alle
þus real as a prince in his halle
leue I þis Chaunteclere in his pasture
And after wol I telle of' his aduenture 4376
When þe monþe in which þe world bigan
þat' highte march when god ferst' made man
Was complete and passed were also [leaf 252, back]
Sefins marche bygan þritty dayes and tuo 4380
Bifelle þat' Chaunteclere in alle his pryde
his seuen wyues walkyng' him bysyde
Caste vp his eyen to þe brighte sonne
That' in þe signe of Taurus was y-ronne: 4384
Twenty degrees. and oon and somwhat' more
He knew by kynde and by non o*þer* lore
That' it' was pryme and crew wiþ blisful steuene
The sonne he sayde is clumben vp on heuene 4388
xl. degrees and oon and more y-wys
Madame *per*telote my worldes blys
Herkne how þese blisful briddes synge
and see þe freisshe floures how þay springe 4392
fful is my*n* herte of' Reuel and solace
But' sodeinly him fel a sorwful case
ffor euer þe latter ende of' Ioye is sone ago
And comunly often tyme it' falleþ so 4396
And if' a Rethor couþe faire endite
He in a Croniq*ue* mighte saufly write
As for a souereyn notabilite /
Now euery wise man herkene to me 4400

This story is also trewe I vndertake
As is þe book' of' launcelot' þe lake
þat' wommen heelde in ful gret' reuerence
Now wol I torne aȝein to my sentence
A kolle fox ful of' sleighte and iniquite
That' in þe groue had woned ȝeeres þre
By heih ymaginacioñ aforn caste
þe same night' þurghout' þe hegges braste
In-to þe yerde þer Chaunteclere þe faire
Was wont' and eek' his wyfes to repayre
And in a bedde of' worstes stille he lay
Til it' was passed vndern of' þe day
Wayting' his tyme on chaunteclere to falle
As gladly dòon þese homicydes alle [leaf 253]
That' in awayte ligge to murþre men
O false murdrour roukyng' in þy den
O newe scariote and newe Genyloun
ffals dissimulour O greke Synoñ
That' broughtest' Troye outrely to sorwe
O Chaunteclere acorsed be þat' morwe
þat' þou in þe ȝerde fleyȝe fro þe beemes
Thou were ful wel y-warned by þin derems
That' þilke day was perilous to þe
But' þat' at' god afore wot' moot' needes be
After þe opynyoñ of certein clerkes
Witnesse on him þat' any clerk/ is
That' in scole gret' altercacioñ
In þis matiere and gret' disputesoñ
And haþ ben of' an hundred þousand men
But I ne can nouȝt' bulte it to þe bren
As can þe holy doctour augustyn
Or Boece or þe Bisschoppe Bradwardyn
Wheþer þat/ goddes wille afore wetyng'
Streyneþ me needely for to don a þing'
Needly clepe I simple necessite
Or elles if' þe free choys be *grau*nted me /

To do þat same þing or to do it nou3t
þough god forwot it er it was y-wrought
Or of his wetyng streigneþ neuer a del
But by necessite condicionel
I wol not haue to doone of such matiere
My tale is of a cokk as 3e schuln after heere
That took his counseil of his wyf wiþ sorwe
To walke in-to þe 3erd vppon þe morwe
That he had mette þe dreem as I 3ou tolde
Wommens counseiles ben ful ofte colde
Wommans counseil brought vs first to wo
And made adam fro paradys to go
þer as he was ful mery and wel at ese /
But for I not whom it might displese [leaf 253, back]
If I counsel of wommen wolde blame
Passe ouer I seyde it in my game
Rede auctours wher þey trete of such matiere
And what þay sein of wommen 3e may heere
These ben þe cokkes wordes and nought myne
I can non harme of no womman devyne
ffayre in þe sande to baþe hire merily
liþ pertelote and alle hire sustres by
A3ein þe sonne and Chaunteclere so fre
Sange meriere þan þe mere-mayde in þe see
ffor Physyalogus saiþ witterly
How þat þey sungen wel and merily
And so bifelle as he cast his ye
amonges þe wortes vpon a butterflye
He was war of þis ffox þat lay ful lowe
¶ No þing ne luste him þanne for to crowe
But cryed anon kok kok and vp he sterte
As man þat was affrayed in his herte
ffor naturelly a beste desireþ to fle
ffro his contrarye if he may it se
þey he neuer hadde seye it erst wiþ his ye
This Chaunteclere when he gan him espye

he wolde han fledde but' þat' þe fox anon
Sayde gentil sire allas what' wol ȝe doon
Been ȝe affrayed of' me þat' am ȝoure freende
Certes sire þen be ȝe vnheende
If' I to ȝou wolde harme or vilanye
I am nought' come ȝoure councel to aspie
But' trewely þe cause of' my comynge
Was oonly to herkne how þat' ȝe synge /
ffor trewely ȝe han as mery a steuene
As any aungel hap þat' is in heuene
Ther-with ȝe han in Physike more felynge
þat' hadde boys or eny þat' can synge
My lord ȝoure fader god his soule blesse
And eek' ȝoure mooder of' hire gentilnesse [leaf 254]
han in myn hous I-ben ful wel at eese
and certes sire ful fayn wolde I ȝou pleese
But' for men speken of' syngyng' I wolde seye
So mote I brouke myne eyen tweye
Saue ȝou I ne herde neuer man so synge
As dide ȝoure fader in þe morwenynge
Certes it was of' herte al þat' he sange
And for to make his voys þe more strange
He wolde so peyne him þat' wiþ boþe his eyen
He moste wynke so lowde he dide cryen
And standen on his typtoos þer-wiþ-al
And strecche forþ his nekke long' and smal
And eek' he was of' such discrecioñ
That' þer was no man in no regioñ
That him in song' or wisdam mighte passe
I haue wel rad daun burnelle the asse
Among his vers þer was a kok'
ffor a prestes sone ȝaf' him a knok'
Vpon his legges whil he was yong' and nyce
He made him for to leese his benefice
But' certein þer is no comparisoñ
Betwixe þe wisdam and discrecioñ

Of' 3oure fader and of' his subtilte
Now syngeþ sire for seinte Charite
Let' see conne 3e 3oure fader countrefete
þis Chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete
As man þat' couþe his tresoñ not' aspye
So was he rauysscht' wiþ his flaterye ¶ Nota bene
¶ Allas 3e lordes many a fals flatour
Is in 3oure Court' and many a losengour
þat' pleasen 3ou more by my feiþ
Then he þat' soþfastnesse vnto 3ou seiþ
Redeþ ecclesiastre of' flaterie
Beþ war 3e lordes of' here treccherie
This Chaunteclere stood heye vpon his toos
Strecching' his necke and huld his eyen clos [leaf 254, back]
And gan to crowe lowde for þe nones
And daun Russel stert' vp al at' oones
And by þe gargage hente Chaunteclere
And on his bak' toward the woode him bere
ffor 3et' was þere noman þat' him sewed
O destyne þat' mayst not' ben eschewed
Allas þat' Chaunteclere fel fro þe bemes
Allas his wyf' ne roughte nought' of' dremes
And on a friday felle al þis meschaunce
O venus þat' art' goddesse of' plesaunce
Seþines þat þi seruañt was þis Chaunteclere
And in þin seruise dede al his powere /
More for delite þan þe world to multiplie
Why woldestow suffre him / on þin day to dye
O Gaufrede deere maister souerayn
That' whan þy worþy king' Richard was slayn
Wiþ schotte compleynedest' his deþ so sore
Why ne hadde I now þin sentence and þin lore
The friday for to chyde as deden 3e /
ffor on a ffriday schortly slayn was he'
þenne wolde I schewe 3ou how þat' I couþe pleyne
ffor Chaunteclere and for his peyne

Certes such cry ne lamentacioñ
Was of' ladyes maade whan yleoñ
Was wonne and Purris wiþ his streighte swerd
Whenne he hente king' Pryam by þe berd
And slayn him as seyde Enneydos
As maden alle þe hennes in þe cloos
Whan þey hadde seye of' chaunteclere þe sigħt'
But' soueraynly dame Pertelote schrigħt'
fful lowder þen dede hasdruþaldes wyff'
Whan þat' hire housbonde hadde lost' his lyff'
And þat' þe Romayns had berud Cartage
Sche was so fulle of torment and of' Rage
þat' wilfully in to þe fuyr sche sterte
And brend hir selue wiþ a stedefast' herte [leaf 255]
O wofulle hennes rigħt' so cryede ȝe
As whan þat' Nero brende þe Cite
Of' Rome cryden þe Senatours wyfes
ffor þat' here housbondes schulde leese here lyues
Wiþouten gilte Nero haþ hem slayn
¶ Now wole I turne vnto my tale agayn
This seely widewe and hire doughtres tuo
Herden þe hennes crien and make woo /
And out' at' þe dore sterten þay anon
And sawe þe fox toward þe groue goon
And bar vpon his bak' þe kok' away
And cryden out harrow and weloway
A ha þe fox and after him þay ran'
And eek' with staues many anoþer man
Ran colle oure dogge Talbot' and Garlond
And Malkyn wiþ hire distaf' in hire hond
Ran cow and calf' and eek' þe verrey hogges
Sore aferde for berkyng' of' þe dogges
And schowtyng' of' men and of' wommen eeke
þey ronne so her hert' þey þoughħ tobreeke
They yelleden as feendes don in helle
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle

GROUP B. § 14. NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE. **Corpus MS.**

Out' of' þe huyues come þe swarm of' bees
þe gees for feere flowen ouer þe trees
So hidous was þe noyse a *benedicite*
Certes he Iakke strawe and his meynee
Ne maden neuere schoutes half' so schrille
Whan þat' þay wolden eny flemyng' kille
As þat' ilke day was maad vpon þe ffox
Of' bras þey broughte beemes and of' Box
Of' horne and boon in whiche þey pouped
And þer-wiþal þey schriched and þey schouted
It' semed as þat' heuen schulde falle
Now goode men I pray 3ou herkneþ alle
Lo how fortune turneþ sodeinly
The hope and eek' þe pruyde of' here enuye [leaf 255, back]
This Cok' þat' lay vpon þis foxes bak'
In alle his drede vnto þe fox he spak'
And sayde sire if' I were as 3e
3et' schuld I say as wis god helpe me
Turneþ a3ein 3e proude cherles alle
A verray pestilence vpon 3ou falle
Now am I come vnto þis woodes syde
Maugre 3our heed þe cok' schal here abyde
I wole him ete in feiþ and þat' anon
The ffox answerde in feiþ it' schal be don
and [as] he spak' þat' word al sodeinly
This Cok' brak' fro his mouþ delyuerly
An heigh vpon a tree he fleigh anoon
And whan þe fox saugh þat' he was goon
Allas *quod* he O Chaunteclere allas
I haue *quod* he don to 3ow a trespas
In als moche as I made 3ou afferd
When I 3ou hente and brought out' of' þe 3erd
But' sire I dede it nought in no wicked entent'
Come doun and I schal telle 3ou what I ment
I schal 3ou seye soþ god helpe me so /
Nay þanne *quod* he I schrewe vs boþe two /

And ferst' I schrewe my self' boþe blood and bones
If' þou begile me ofter þan ones /
Thou schalt' nomore wiþ þin flaterye
Do me to synge and wynke wiþ myn ye
ffor he þat' wynkeþ whan he schulde se
As wisly god let' him neuer þe
Nay quod þe fox god ȝiue him meschaunce
That' is so vndiscret' of' gouernaunce
þat' iangleþ whan he schulde haue pees
Lo suche it is for to be recheles /
and necligent' and trusteþ on flaterye
But' ȝe þat' halden þis tale a folye
As of' a fox and of' a cok' and an hen
Takeþ þe moralite goode men [leaf 256]
ffor seint' poule saiþ / alle þat' writen is
To oure doctrine / it is y-writen y-wis
Takeþ þe fruit/ and leteþ þe chaff be stille
Now goode god if' þat' it' be þin wille /
As seiþ my lord so make vs alle goode men
And bringe vs alle to his heihe blisse ameN

Here endeþ þe Nonne prestes tale

GROUP H. FRAGMENT IX.

§ 1. THE MANCIPLE'S HEAD-LINK.

CORPUS MS.

[*on leaf* 256] Here folweþ þe *Pr*ologe of' þe mañ-
¶ ciples tale Ca^m xxiij^m

WOt' ȝe not' wher þer stant/ a litel toun
Which þat' is cleped Bobbe vp and doun
vnder þe Blee in Caunterbery way
Ther gan oure Oste for to Iape and play
And sayde syres what' donne is in þe myre
Is no man for preyer ne for huyre
That' wole awake oure felawe be-hynde /
A þeef' might' him ful lightly robbe and bynde
Se how he nappeþ se for goddes bones
þat' he wol falle fro his hors at' ones
Is þat' a Cook' of' londoñ wiþ meschañce
Do him come forth he knoweþ his penãnce
ffor he schal telle a tale by my fey
Al þough it be nought' worþ a botel hey
Awake þou Cook' *quod* he god ȝiue þe sorwe
What eyleþ þe to slepe by þe morwe
hast' þou had fleen al night' or art' þou drunke
Or hast' þou wiþ som quene al night' y-swunke
So þat' þou mayst' nought' holden vp þin heed
This Cook' þat' was ful pale and no þing' reed
Seyde oure Ost' so god my soule blesse
As þer is falle on me such heuynesse
Not' I nouȝt' why me were leuer to slepe
Then þe beste galoñ of' wyn in Chepe

Wel *quod* þe maunciple if' it' þe may don ese
To þe *sir* Cook' and to no wight' displese
Which þat' heer rydeþ in þis companye /
And þat' oure host' wole of' his curtesye
I wole as now excuse þe of' þin tale [leaf 256, back]
ffor in good feiþ þi visage is ful pale
Thin eyen dasewen soþly as me þinkeþ
And wel I woot' þi breþ ful soure stinkeþ
That' schewe þ wel þou art' nought' wel disposed
Of' me certeyn þou schalt' nought' ben y-glosed
Se how he goneth lo his drunken wight'
As þough he wolde vs swolwe anon right'
hald clos þin mouþ man by þyn fader kyn
The deuyl of' helle sette his foot' *þe*rin
This cursed breth wol infecte vs alle
ffy stynkynge swyn fy foule mote þe falle
Takeþ heede sires of' þis lusty man
Now sweete sire wole ȝe iuste at' þe van
Ther-to me þenkeþ ȝe ben wel y-schape
I trowe þat' ȝe haue drunken wyn ape
And þat' is whan men pleye wiþ a straw /
And wiþ his speche þe Cooke wax al wraw
And on þe maunciple bygan he nodde faste
ffor lakke of' speche and doun þe hors him caste
Wher as he lay til þat' men him vp took'
This was a fayr Chiuacheef' of' a cook'
Allas he ne hadde holde him by his ladel
And er þat' he aȝein were in his sadel
Ther was a gret' schowuyng' boþe to and fro
To lifte him vp and mochil care and woo
So vnweldy was þis sely pallede goste
And to þe maunciple þenne spak' oure Oste
By cause þat' drynke haþ dominacioñ
Vpon þis man by my Sauacioñ
I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale
ffor were it' wyn or olde or moysty ale

That' he haþ drunke he spekeþ so in his nose /
And fneseþ faste and eek' he haþ þe pose
he hath also to don more þan ynough
To kepe him and his capel out' of' þe slough
And if' he falle fro his capil eft' sone / [leaf 257]
Thenne schulle we alle haue ynough to doone
In liftyng' vp his heuy drunken cors
Telle on þin tale of' him make I no fors
But' ȝit' maunciple in feiþ þou art' to nyce
Thus openly to reproue him of' his vice
Anoþer day he wole perauenture
Reclayme þe and bringen þe to lure
I mene he speke wole of' smale þinges
And for to pynchen at' þine rekenynges
That' were not' honeste if' it' come to pref'
No quod þe maunciple þat' were a gret' meschief'
So might' he bringe me in to þe snare
Yet' hadde I leuer payen for þe mare
Which he ryt' on þan he schulde wiþ me stryue
I wol not' wraþþe him so mote I þryue
þat' þat' I spak' I seyde it' in my bourde
And wite ȝe wel I haue heer in my gourde
A draught' of' wyn ye of' a rype grape
And right' anon ȝe schullen seen a good Iape
This Cook' schal drynke þer-of' if' I may
vp peyne of' my lyf' he wol not' say nay
And certeinly to tellen as it/ was
Of' þis vessell þe Cook' drank' faste allas
What' needeþ it' he drank' ynough aforn
And whan he hadde pouped in his horn
To þe maunciple he took' þe gourde again
And of' þat' drynke þe cook' was wonder fayn
And þanked him in such wise as he cowde
Then gan oure Oste to lawhe wonder lowde
And sayde I se wel it' is necessarie
Where þat' we goon good drink' wiþ vs to carie

ffor þat' wol tourne rancour and disese
To acord and loue and many a word to peese
O Bachus y-blessed be þy name
þat so canst' torne ernest' in to game
Worschipe and þonke be to þy deite [leaf 257, back]
Of' þat' matiere ne gete ȝe nomore of' me
Tel on þi tale þou mañciple I þe preye
Wel sire *quod* he now kerkneþ what' I seye ¶ Explicit *prologus*

[*on leaf* 257, *back*] Incipit fabula

Whan phebus dwelde heer in þis erþe adoun
As olde booke maken mencioun
he was þe moste lusty bachiler
Of/ alle þe world and eek þe best archeer
he slough Phytoñ þe serpent/ as he lay
Slepyng agayn þe sonne vpon a day
And many anoþer noble worþy dede /
He wiþ his bowe brought as men nowe rede
Pleyen he couþe of euery menstralcye
And syngen þat it was a melodye
To heeren of his cleere voys þe soun
Certes þe king of Thebes amphyoun
That wiþ his syngyng walled þat Cite
Cowde neuer syngen half so wel as he
Therto he was þe semlyeste man
þat is or was siþen þe world bygan
What needeþ it his fetures to discryue
ffor in þis world was non so fair on lyue
he was þer-wiþ fulfild of gentilnesse
Of honour and of parfyte worþinesse
This Phebus þat was flour of Bachelrye
As wel in freedam as in Chiualrie
ffor disporte in signe eek of victorie
Of Phytoñ so as telleþ vs þe storye
Was worþy to beren in his hond a bowe /
Now hadde þis Phebus in his hous a crowe
Which in a cage he fostred many a day
And taught it speke as þat men teche a Iay

Whit' was þis Crowe as is a snow whit' swan
And countrefeted þe speche of' euery man
he cowde when he schulde telle a tale
Ther-wiþ in al þe world no nightyngale
Ne couþe by an hundred þousend deel [leaf 258]
Syngen so wonderly meryly and weel
Now hadde þis Phebus in his hous a wyf'
Which þat' he loued more þan his owne lyf'
And night' and day dyd euer his diligence
Hir for to plese and don hire reuerence
Saue oonly if' þe soþ þat' I schal sayn
Gelous he was and wolde haue kept' hire fayn
ffor him were loþ by-laped for to be
And so euery wight' in such degre
But' al for nouȝt' for it' auayleþ nouȝt'
A good wyff' þat is clene of' werk' and þought
Schulde nought' be kepte in non awayte certain
And trewely þe labour is in vayn
To kepe a schrewe for it wol nouȝt' be
This halde I for a verray nycete
To spille labour for to keepe wyues
Thus writen olde Clerkes in here lyues
But' now to purpos as I first' bigan
This worþy Phebus doþ al þat' he can
To plesen hyre wenyng' by such plesañce
And for his manhode and his gouernañce
That' no man schulde haue put him fro hir grace
But' god it' woot/ þer may no man enbrace
As to distreyne a þing' which þat nature
Haþ naturelly sette in a creature
Take eny bryd and put it' in a kage
And do al þin entent and þy corage
To fostre it tendrely wiþ mete and drinke
Of' alle deyntees þat' þou canst' byþinke
And keepe it/ also clenly as þou may
Al þough his cage of' golde be neuer so gay

3et' haþ þis bridde by .xx. þousand folde
Leuer in a fforest' þat' is wilde and colde
Gon ete wormes and such wrecchedenesse
ffor euer þis bridde wol doon his busynesse
To eskape out' of' his cage when he may [leaf 258, back]
his liberte þe bridde desireþ ay
Let' take a catte and fostre him wel wiþ melk'
An tendre fleissch̄ and make his couche of' selk'
And let' him seen a mous go by þe walle
And anon he weyueþ milke fleissche and alle
And euery deynte þat' is in þat' hous
Such appetyt' haþ sche to ete a mous
Lo he[re] haþ luste his dampnacioñ
And appetyt' flemyth discrecioñ
As þe wolf' haþ also a vyleyns kynde
The lewedeste wolf' þat' sche may fynde
Of' lest' of' reputacioñ þat' wol sche take
In tyme whan hire luste to haue a make
Alle þise ensamples speke I by þese men
That' ben vntrewe and noþing' by wommen
ffor men han euere a likerous appetyt'
On lowere þing' to parforme here delyt'
Then on here wyfes ben þay neuer so fayre
Ne neuer so trewe ne so debonaire
ffleissche is so newefongul wiþ meschañce
That' we ne konne in no þing' han plesañce
That' sowneþ in to vertu eny while
This Phebus which þat' þoughṫ' vpon no gile
Desceyued was for alle his Iolite
ffor vnder him anoþer hadde sche
A man of' litel reputacioñ
Nought' worþ to Phebus in comparisoñ
The more harm it' is it' happeþ ofte so
Of' which þer comeþ mochil harme and wo
And so bifelle whan Phebus was absent'
His wif' anon haþ for hir lemman sent'

Hire lemman certes þis is a kauissch speche
fforȝiueþ it me and þat I ȝou besecche
The wyse Plato saiþ as ȝe may rede
þe worde moot need acorde wiþ þe dede
ȝif men schal telle proprely a þing [leaf 259]
The word moot/ cosyn be to þe workyng
I am a boystous man rihte þus say I
Ther is no difference trewely
Betwix a wyf þat is of heih degre
If of hire body dishoneste sche be
And a pouere wenche othir þan þis
If it so be þey werke boþe amys
But þat þe gentil is in staat aboue
Sche schal be cleped his lady as in loue
And for þat oþer is a pouer womman
Sche schal be cleped his wenche or his lemman
And god it woot myn owne deere broþer
Men leyn þat oon as lowe as liþ þat oþer
Right so betwixe a titles tyraunt
And an outlawe or a þeef erraunt
The same I say þer is no difference /
To alisaundre was tolde þis sentence /
That for þe tyraunt is of grettere might
By force of meyne for to sleen doun right
And brenne hous and home and make al playn
Lo þerfore is he cleped a Capitayn
¶ And for þe outlawe haþ but smal meigne
And may not doon so gret an harm as he
Ne bringe a Contre to so gret meschees
Men clepen him an outlawe or a þeef
But for I am a man not texted wel
I wol not telle of Tytus neuer a deel
I wol go to my tale as I began
Whan Phebus [wyf] hadde sent for hire lemman
Anon þey wroughten alle here lust volage
This white crowe þat heng ay in þe kage

Bihelde hire werk' and seyde neuer a word
And whan þat home was come Phebus þe lord
This crowe sange cokkow cokkow cokkow
What' bryd q*uo*þ Phebus what' song' syngest' þou
Ne were þou wont' so meryly to synge [leaf 253, back]
þat' to myn-herte it' was a reioisschinge
To here þi voys alłas what' song' is þis
By god q*uod* he I synge nought amys
Phebus q*uod* he for al þi worþinesse
ffor alle þy beaute and þyn gentilnesse
ffor alle þi song' and al þi menstralcye
ffor al þi waytyng' blered is þin ye
Wiþ on of' litel reputacioñ
Nought' worþ to þe as in comparisoñ
þe mountañce of' a gnatte so mote I þriue
ffor on þy bed þy wyff / I say him swyue
What' wole ȝe more þe crowe anon him tolde
By sadde tokenes and by wordes bolde
How þat' his wyf' hadde doon hire leccherie
him to gret' schame and to gret' vilanye
And tolde him ofte he say it' wiþ his eyen
þis Phebus gan awayward for to wryen
him þought' his sorwful herte brast a tuo /
His bowe he bente and sette þer-Inne a floo
And in his Ire þan haþ he his wif' y-slayn
This is þeffecte þer is nomore to sayn
ffor sorwe of' which he brak' his mynstralcye
Boþe harpe and lewte gyterne and Sawterye
And eek' he brak' his arwes and his bowe
And after þat' þus spak' he to þe crowe
Traytour q*uod* he wiþ tonge of' Scorpioñ
Thou hast' me brought' to my confusioñ
Allas þat' I was wrought' why nere I ded
O deere wyf' o gemme of' lustyhed
That' were to me so sadde and eek' so trewe
Now lyes þou deed wiþ face pale of' hewe /

fful gulteles þat' durst' I swere ẏwys
O rakel hound to don so foule amys
O trouble witte .O. Ire recheles
That' vnauysed smytest' gulteles /
O wan-truste ful of' fals suspẽcioñ [leaf 260]
Where was þy witte and þi discrecioñ
O euery man be war of' rekelnesse
Ne trowe noþing' wiþouten strong' witnesse
Smyt' nouȝt' to sone er þat' þou wite why
And be auysed wel and soburly
Or ȝe doon eny execucioñ
Vpon ȝoure Ire for suspecioñ
Allas a þousand folk' han rakel Ire
ffully fordoon or brought' hem in þe myre
Allas for sorwe I wil my selue slee
And to þe-crowe O false þeef' sayde he
I wol þe quyte anon þy false tale
þour songe whilom lyk' a nightyngale
Now schalt' þou false þeef' þi song' forgon
Eeke þin white feþeres euerichon
Ne neuer in alle þi lyue schalt' þou speke
Thus schal men on a traitour ben awreke
Thou and þin hospreinge euere schuln be blake
Ne neuere swete noyse schul ȝe make /
But' euer crye agayn tempest' and reyn
In toknyng' þat' þurgh þe my wyf' was slayn
And to þe crowe he sterte and þat' anon
And pulled his white feþeres euerychon
and made him blak' and reft' him alle his song'
And eek' his speche and out' at' þe dore him slong'
vnto þe deuel which I him betake /
And for þis caas ben alle crowes blake
Lordynges by þis ensample I ȝou preye
Beþ war and takeþ keepe what' þat' ȝe seye
Ne telleþ neuer no man in ȝour lyff/
how þat' anoþer man haþ dight' his wyf'

He wole 3ow haten mortelly certein
Daun Salomon as wise clerkes sein
Techeþ a man to kepe his tonge wel
But as I sayde I am nought text wel
But naþeles þus taughte me my dame [leaf 260, back]
My sone þenk on þe erowe a goddes name
My sone keepe wel þi tonge and kepe þy frende
A wikked tonge is worse þan a feende
My sone ffrom a feend men may hem blesse
My sone god of his endeles goodnesse /
Walled a tonge wiþ teeþ and lippes eeke
ffor man schulde him auyse what he speeke
My sone ful ofte for to mochel speche
haþ many a man be spilt as clerkes teche
But for litel speche auysily
Is no man schent to speke generally
My sone þy tonge schuldest þou restreigne
At alle tyme but whan þou dost þy peyne
To speke of god in honour and preyere
The ferste vertu sone if þou wolt lere
Is to restreyne and kepe wel þi tunge
þus lernen children whanne þey ben 3onge
My sone of mochel spekyng euel auysed
Ther lasse spekyng hadde ynough suffised
Comeþ mochil harm þus was me told and taught
In mochil speche synne wanteþ naught
Wostow wher-of a rakil tonge serueþ
Right as a swerd forkutteþ and forkerueþ
An arm a tuo my deere sone right so .
A tunge kutteþ frendschipe al a tuo
A ianglere is to god abhominable /
Rede Salamon so wys and honorable /
Rede Dauyd and his psalmys red senekke
My sone speek nought but wiþ þin heed þou bekke
Dissimule as þou were defe if þat þou heere
A Iangler speke of perilous mateere /

þe flemyng' saiþ and lerne it if' þe leste
þat lytel Iangelynge causeþ mechel reste
My sone if' þou no wickede word hast' seyd
þe þar nouȝt' drede for to be bywreyd
But' he þat' haþ myssayd I dar wel sayn
he may by no way clepe his word agayn
Thing' þat' is sayde is sayde and forþ it' goþ
Though him repente or be him neuer so loþ
he is his þralle to whom þat' he haþ sayd
A tale of' which he is now yuele payd
My sone be war and be nouȝt auctour newe
Of tydynges wheþer þay ben fals or trewe
Wher so þou come amonges heihe or lowe
Kepe wel þy tunge and þenk' vpon þe crowe

Explicit' fabula mancipii

GROUP I. FRAGMENT X.

§ 1. THE BLANK-PARSON LINK.

[This is really a link between some unwritten Tale and the Parson's. It has been made into the Manciple-Parson Link (or Yeoman-Parson by the Christ-Church MS) by Chaucer's copiers, though not meant for it.]

CORPUS MS.

Here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe p*ar*soñ [*on leaf* 261]

By þat þe maunciple hadde his tale ended Ca^m xxiiij^m
The sonne fro þe souþ syde is descended
So lowe þat he was nought to my sight
Degrees xxix as of highte /
Ten of þe clokke it was so as I gesse /
ffor xj foote a lytel more or lesse
My schadwe was at þilke tyme as þere /
Of suche feet as my lengþe parted wère /
In six foote equal of p*ro*porcioñ
Ther-wiþ þe mones exaltacioñ
I mene libra alwey gan ascende
As we were entryng at a thropes ende
ffor wiþ oure Oste as he was wont to gye
As in þis caas oure ioly companye /
Sayde in þis wise lordynges eu*er*ychon
Now lakkeþ vs no tale more þan oon
ffulfild is my sentence and my degre
Who wile now telle a tale let se
Almost fulfilled is myn ordynaunce
I p*ra*y to god so ȝiue him right good chañce
þat telleþ þis tale to vs lustely
Sire prest *quod* he art þou a vicary
Or art þou a p*er*soñ say soþ by þy fey
Be what þou be ne breke nought oure pley

ffor euery man saue þou haþ told his tale
vnbokele and schewe vs what is in þy male [leaf 261, back]
ffor trewely me þenkeþ by þy chēere
Thou scholdest knette vp wel a gret matiere
Telle vs a fable anon for cokkes bones
This *per*soñ answered al at oones
Thou getest fable non y-tolde for me
ffor Poule þat writeþ vnto Thimothe
Repreueþ hem þat wayuen soþfastnesse
And tellen fables and such wrecchednesse
Whi schulde I schewen draff out of my feste /
Whan I may schewen whete if þat me leste
ffor which I saye if þat þou luste to heere
Moralite and *ver*tuous matiere
And þenne þat ȝe woln ȝiue me audience
I wol ful fayn at cristes reuerence /
Don ȝou plesaunce lefful as I can
But trusteþ wel I am a sothryn man
I can nought geste rom ram rūf by lettre
Ne god wot rym holde I but lytel bettre
And *þerfore* if ȝou luste I wol nought glose
I wol ȝou telle a mery tale in prose
To knitte vp al þis feste an ende
And ihesu for his grace witte me sende
To schewe ȝou þe wey in þis visage
Of þilke p*ar*fyt glorious pilgrimage
That highte Ier*usalem* Celestial
And if ȝe vouche sauf anon ȝe schal
Bygynne vpon my tale for which I preye
Telle ȝoure avis I can no bettre seye
But naþeles þis meditacioū
I putte it ay vnder correctioū
Of clerkes for I am nought text wel
I take but þe sentence trustel wel.
þerfore I make protestacioū
That I wol stonde to correctioū

Vppon þis word we han assented sone [*a leaf cut out of the Corpus MS*]
[for as hit semed / hit was for to doone [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 268]
to enden / in som ver*tuous* sentence
and for to yeve him space / *and* audience 64
and bad oure Oste / he shulde to him say
that alle we / to telle his tale him pray
oure Oste had the wordes / for vs alle
sir prest q*uod* he / now faire yow befalle 68
sey what yow luste / *and* we wol gladly here
and with̄ that worde / he ſeide in this manere
telleth̄ q*uod* he / youre meditaciouñ
but hasteth yow / the sonne wol a-douñ 72
beth̄ fructuous / *and* that in litel space
and to do wel / god sende yow his grace.
Here endith the p*ar*son his prolog] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract stops*]

THE PARSON'S TALE.

A TREATISE ON PENITENCE, IN 3 PARTS:

Part I. On **Penitence**, and its 1st requisite **Contrition** (A) (p. 593—612).
Part II. On its 2nd requisite, **Confession** (B) (p. 612—679).
Part III. On its 3rd requisite, **Satisfaction** (C) (p. 679—684), with the Writer's Leave-taking and Retractations (p. 684-85).

PART I. (p. 593—612).

ON PENITENCE, AND ITS 1st REQUISITE, CONTRITION.

Proem on Jeremiah vi. 16. The Tale is to be on *Penitence* as a full noble way to lead folk to Christ, and is to treat of
i. 'what is Penitence' (p. 594).
ii. 'whennes it is cleped Penitence'. (*not in the Tale.*)
iii. 'in how manye maneres been the acciouns or werkynges of Penitence' (p. 594-5).
iv. 'how many speces ther been of Penitence' (p. 595).
v. 'whiche thynges apertenen and bihouen to Penitence' (p. 595—682: nearly all Parts I and III, and all Part II).
vi. 'whiche thynges destourben Penitence' (at end of Part III, p. 682) (p. 593).

i. **Penitence** defined, by *a.* St Ambrose; *b.* 'som doctour'; *c.* the writer. Its requisites: 1. bewailing of sins; 2. purpose to have shrift, to do satisfaction, never to sin again, to continue in good works (p. 594).
[ii. *not given.*]
iii. The 3 actions of Penitence: 1. Baptism after sin; 2. not to do deadly sin after baptism; 3. not thus to do venial sin (p. 594-95).
iv. The 3 speces or kinds of Penitence: 1. Solemn (to be put out of church, or do open penance); 2. Common (to go naked on pilgrimage); 3. Private (p. 595).
v. The 3 necessities or requisites for Penitence (p. 596—682):
A. Contrition of heart (p. 596—612).
B. Confession of mouth (Part II, p. 612—679).
C. Satisfaction (Part III, p. 679—682).
Penitence avails against 3 things, by which we wrath Christ (p. 595).

A. Contrition is the root of Penitence, whose stem bears branches and leaves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaction.
Contrition also bears a seed of grace, whose heat draws men to God. (Simile of the child and his nurse's milk.)
Penance is the tree of life (p. 596).
Four Points to be known about Contrition:
1. What it is; 2. the causes that move a man to it; 3. how to be contrite; 4. what it avails the soul (p. 597).
2. The 6 Causes that should move a man to Contrition:
a. Remembrance of Sins (p. 597-8).
b. Whoso does sin is the Thrall of Sin (p. 598-99).
c. Dread of the Day of Doom and the Pains of Hell (p. 599—604). These described: the Doom (p. 599-600); Job's 'lond of mysese and of derknesse' (p. 600-1); the 3 shames in hell against (1) 'Honours, (2) delices, and (3) richesses' (p. 601); poverty in 4 things: no treasure, food, clothing, or friends (p. 602); and no delights of the 5 senses. The pain shall be eternal (p. 603). Hell is orderless (p. 603-4). The 7 causes why the damnd have lost all hope (p. 604).
d. Remembrance of the good works we've left undone, and the loss of the good works done while we were in sin (p. 604-6). Deadly sin wipes out all good works formerly done (p. 605); and no good works can be done in deadly sin (p. 605-6). The new French song, *J'ai tout perdu mon temps* (also quoted in Chaucer's late poem of *Fortune*).

e. Remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins (p. 606). In man's sin, every ordinance is turnd up-so-down (p. 607). For this disorder Christ sufferd (p. 608).
f. The hope of 3 things: 1. Forgiveness of Sins, 2. the Gift of Grace to do well, 3. the Glory of Heaven (p. 609).
3. How to be contrite. Contrition must be universal and total: for sins of thought, for desires against God's law, for wicked words as well as wicked deeds (p. 610). Contrition must be angwishous and continual (p. 609-11).
4. How Contrition helps the soul. It sometimes delivers a man from sin; destroys the prison of hell; cleanses the soul; changes the son of Wrath to the son of Grace (p. 611-12).

PART II (*no.* V. *continued*).

B. CONFESSION (THE 2ND REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 612—679).
B. Confession. § 1. (l. 317) 'what is confession' (p. 612).
§ 2. 'wheither it oghte nedes be doon or noon' (p. 672-9).
§ 3. 'whiche thynges been couenable to verray Confession' (p. 674-79).

CONFESSION, § 1.

I. 'Confession is verray shewynge of synnes to the preest' (l. 318) (p. 612). We must understand too
a. (l. 321) 'whennes that synnes spryngen' (p. 612—15).
b. 'how they encreessen' (p. 615-16; 672-74).
c. 'whiche they been' (p. 616—672).
1.*a.* Sin sprang from the fall of Adam (p. 612). The legend of Adam and Eve told (p. 613). From Adam we took Original Sin, and were born sons of eternal damnation; but Baptism rescues us; though we keep liability to temptation, or Concupiscence (p. 613-14).
Concupiscence, or the nourishing and occasion of sin. St Paul and St Jerome's temptations (p. 614-15).
1.*b.* How Sin grows in a man. 1. by Concupiscence; 2. Subjection to the Devil; 3. Hesitation; 4. Doing, the Sin becoming Actual (p. 615-16).
1.*c.* Sin is *a.* venial, *β.* deadly (or mortal).
a. 1. Venial Sin defined. It skips into Deadly Sin. (Simile of the drops of water into a vessel's hold drowning the ship;) (p. 616).
β. 1. Deadly Sin defined (p. 617).
a. 2. Of divers small venial sins, hardly thought sins (p. 617-18); eating, drinking, talking, too much; using your wife too much; not visiting the sick (p. 617); talking vanities at church, &c. (p. 618). Cure of venial sins by love to Christ, prayer, confession, good works, receiving the Sacrament, holy-water, &c. (p. 618).
1.*c.* *β.* 2. *The Seven Deadly Sins.* The Chieftains, head and spring, of all other Sins (p. 619).
i. Pride (p. 619-26), and its Remedy (p. 626-8).
ii. Envy (p. 628-30), and its Remedy (p. 630-1).
iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its Remedy (p. 642-5).
iv. Accidie or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), and its Remedy (p. 650-1).
v. Avarice or Covetousness (p. 651-7), and its Remedy (p. 657-8).
vi. Gluttony (p. 658-9), and its Remedy (p. 660).
vii. Lechery (p. 660-8), and its Remedy (p. 668-72).
i. PRIDE (p. 619—626). Its 16 (and more) Twigs. 1. Disobedience, 2. Boasting, 3. Hypocrisy, 4. Despite, 5. Arrogance (p. 619), 6. Impudence, 7. Swelling of Heart (rejoicing in harm done), 8. Insolence, 9. Elation, 10. Impatience, 11. Contumacy, 12.

Presumption, 13. Irreverence, 14. Pertinacity, 15. Vain-glory, 16. Jangling (chattering).

A private kind of pride (the Host's Wife's and Wife of Bath's[1]), wanting to go to offering first, &c. (p. 620).

Two kinds of Pride, *a.* 'within man's heart', *b.* without; *b.* being the sign of *a.*, 'as the gaye leefsel atte Taverne is sign of the wyn that is in the Celer'[2] (p. 620-21), *b.* outside pride.

a. in dear clothing, 1. superfluity of it: its cost, furring, chisel-holes, dragging in the dung, waste of material (p. 621), unfitness for giving to the poor: 2. scantness of it: showing men's privy members, and buttocks (like a she-ape's rump), and the former as half-flayd, in parti-colourd hose[3]. The 'outrageous array of Women' (p. 623).

β. in horses (p. 623), and vicious grooms to tend 'em; plate-harness, &c.

γ. in household: keeping too many retainers or servants, who oppress the poor (p. 624).

δ. in table: not asking the poor to feasts; having burning and ornamented dishes[4]; too costly cups, &c., and too choice minstrelsy (p. 624).

What Pride sins are deadly, and what venial (p. 624).

The Sources of Pride (p. 624): goods of Nature, Fortune, Grace (p. 624). The Folly of Pride in any of these goods of Nature: 'we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder, and .. of o nature'[5]. The general signs of *Gentleness.* (The flies calld 'bees', and their stingless king) (p. 625); 3 gifts of Grace; 3 of Fortune. The brittleness of popular praise[6] (p. 626).

The Remedy against Pride.

Humility or Meekness, and its 3 kinds: in 1. heart, 2. mouth, 3. works. 4 kinds of each of these (p. 626-27).

ii. Envy (p. 627-30): defined by the Philosopher and St Augustine. It springs from Malice (p. 627).

Malice; 2 kinds of: 1. hardness of heart, or recklessness; 2. opposing truth (p. 627).

The 2 kinds of Envy (p. 628): 1. sorrow at other men's prosperity; 2. joy at other men's harm: whence comes

Backbiting; 5 kinds (p. 628): 1. praise with a *but* at the end; 2. turning well-meant things upside down to ill ones; 3. lessening a neighbour's goodness; 4. putting one man above another; 5. glad listening to scandal (p. 628).

Grudging or murmuring (p. 628): 1. against God (p. 629); 2. Murmuring from avarice, 3. from pride, 4. from envy; 5. among Servants, who say 'the Devil's *Paternoster*'; 6. Murmuring from ire or hate: thence, *a.* Bitterness of Heart, *b.* Discord, *c.* Scorning; *d.* Accusing (p. 629); *e.* Malignity (p. 630).

The Remedy against Envy (p. 630-31).

Love of God and one's neighbour. How a man shall love his neighbour. How an enemy is included in the name 'neighbour' (p. 630). 3 Remedies of Love, against 3 deeds of Hate (p. 631). Love is the medicine that casts out the venom of Envy from man's heart (p. 631).

iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its 2 kinds: *a.* good Ire or Wrath (p. 632); *b.* wicked Ire, and its 2 kinds: sudden ire, and ire of malice aforethought (p. 632-33).

Three Shrews that forge in the Devil's furnace: Pride, Envy, and Contumely (p. 633).

[1] Melibe-Monk Link, B. § 11; and General Prologue, A.

[2] Chaucer's father no doubt had a sign outside his wine-shop or tavern in Thames Street, London.

[3] The outspoken and somewhat coarse abuse of the new fashions in dress is a great change from Chaucer's admirable Third-Period chaff of the moral short-comings of the monks and friars, &c., in the Prologue and middle Tales. If this is not change of man, it's change of mood.

[4] Chaucer must have seen plenty of these when he was page, valet, and squire.

[5] Compare Chaucer's *Gentleness, &c.* [6] Compare Clerk's Tale, Part VI, st. 135.

Wrath takes away a man's wit and spiritual life (p. 634).
Fruits of Wrath: 1. Hate. 2. War and wrong. 3. Manslaughter, *a.* spiritual; *b.* bodily (p. 634).
a. The 3 kinds of spiritual Manslaughter (3, calld 6 in MSS. p. 634): 1. by Hate. 2. by Backbiting. 3. Giving wicked Counsel, by Fraud (p. 634).
b. bodily Manslaughter: slaying with your tongue, giving orders or counsel to slay a man (p. 634).
Manslaughter in deed: its 4 (that is, 7) kinds (p. 635): 1. by law: a Justice condemning a man to death; 2. justifiable homicide, in defence of one's own life; 3. by misadventure: shooting an arrow, &c.; 4. a woman overlying her child; 5. a man making a woman barren by drinks, &c., killing the fœtus within her, shedding his seed in the wrong place; a woman killing the child in her womb; 6. a woman killing her child (after birth) for shame; 7. a man by lechery or blows killing a fœtus.
(Sixteen) other sins coming from Ire or Anger.
1. blaming or despising God, as hazarders do (Cp. *Pardoner's Tale*) (p. 635); and those who treat of the Sacrament of the altar irreverently (p. 636).
2. Attry anger: making angry false excuses for sin.
3. Swearing, which dismembers Christ (p. 636).
a. Of lawful Swearing, before a Judge: its 3 conditions, and its motives; *b.* God's name and Christ's, not to be taken in vain (p. 637); *c.* swearing for gentility or manliness (p. 638); *d.* swearing suddenly; *e.* of Adjuration and Conjuration by enchanters and necromancers; *f.* of Divination by Dreams, &c.; *g.* of Charms for Wounds and Maladies (p. 638).
4. Lying (p. 638), and its 6 kinds.
5. Flattering. How Flatterers are the Devil's Nurses, his Enchanters and Chaplains (p. 639).
6. Cursing that comes of irous heart: Malison.
7. Chiding and Reproach (p. 640); (specially a chiding wife[1]) (p. 640-41).
8. Scorning (p. 641).
9. Giving wicked Counsel (p. 641).
10. Sowing and making Discord (p. 642).
11. Double tongue (p. 642).
12. Betraying of Counsel (p. 642).
13. Menace.
14. Idle words.
15. Jangling (chattering) (p. 642).
16. Japing (joking) (p. 642-43).
The Remedy against Anger (p. 643-5). Debonairtee and Patience (p. 643). Four kinds of grievances, and their remedies: 1. wicked words, 2. loss of goods, 3. harm of body, 4. outrageous labour (p. 644).
Incentives to Patience. Story of the Philosopher and Child (p. 644-45). Obedience comes from Patience (p. 645).
iv. Accidie, or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), is an enemy to the 3 states of man,—1. innocence (p. 645), 2. prayer (p. 646), 3. grace;—and to one's livelihood. Its 12 bad consequences (p. 646): 1. Sloth (and its remedy); 2. Dread to begin good works (p. 646); 3. Wanhope, or Despair (and its Remedy) (p. 647); 4. Somnolence (p. 648), and 5. Negligence, or 6. Recklessness, and the Remedy for each; 7. Idleness; 8. *Tarditas*, or tarrying before turning to God (p. 649); 9. Lachesse, or giving up a good work begun; 10. Coldness; 11. Undevotion; 12. Worldly sorrow (p. 649).
The Remedy against Accidie (p. 650-51): Fortitude or Strength, and its 5 kinds. 1. Magnanimity[2] or great Courage; 2. Faith or Hope; 3. Assurance; 4. Magnificence; 5. Constancy (p. 651).

[1] Does Chaucer here refer to his former wife?
[2] Miswritten 'Magnificence' in Ellesmere and Lansdowne MSS.

v. AVARICE (p. 651-57). The difference between Avarice and Covetousness (p. 651); and between an Idolater and an avaricious man (p. 652). Of Covetousness, and lords' extortion from their bondmen: "humble folk been Cristes freendes" (p. 652-53). The Duty of lords to their thralls or churls. Of those that pillage Holy Church (p. 653-54); lords who plunder the poor are like wolves (p. 654). Of Deceit between Merchant and Merchant (p. 654). Of honest bodily Merchandise (the surplus of one country may be sent to help another) (p. 654). Of spiritual Merchandise, or Simony, and its 2 kinds (p. 655),—thieves that steal Christ's souls get livings (p. 655-56);—Hasardry or Games of Chance (p. 656). Other outcomes of Avarice (p. 656): 1. Lying, 2. Theft (bodily and spiritual) (p. 656-57), 3. False Witness, 4. False Oaths (p. 657).

The Remedy against Avarice (p. 657): Mercy and Pity, and reasonable Liberality (p. 658). Of foolish largess (p. 658).

vi. GLUTTONY (p. 658-59), and its 5 kinds (p. 659): 1. Drunkenness, or the burial of man's reason; 2. a troubled spirit; 3. bad way of eating; 4. distemperd bodily humours; 5. forgetfulness. Or, as St Gregory says, 1. eating too soon; 2. eating too delicate food; 3. taking too much; 4. troubling too much about cooking food; 5. eating greedily: these are the 5 fingers of the devil's hand (p. 659).

The Remedy against Gluttony (p. 660): Abstinence, and its fellows. Temperance, Shame, Content with plain food, Moderation, Soberness, Sparing (p. 660).

vii. LECHERY (p. 660). Its punishment in the Old Testament (p. 660). Adultery, and the desire of it (p. 661-62).

The 5 fingers of the Devil's other hand (p. 662); 1. foolish looking; 2. villainous touching; 3. foul words; 4. kissing (old dotards, and dry dogs at a rose-tree (p. 662); and how a man should love his wife); 5. the stinking deed of lechery (p. 663). Its kinds: 1. Fornication. Taking a maid's maidenhead, or 100th fruit (p. 663). 2. Adultery, defined. 3. Harms following from it: *a.* breaking of faith; *b.* theft (of the wife's body from her husband (Joseph and Potiphar's wife), and of her soul from Christ); *c.* breaking God's commandment, and defouling Christ (p. 664). Of Harlots and Bawds (p. 665). Adultery is set between Theft and Manslaughter. More kinds of Adultery: 1. by Men bound by Religious Vows, &c.; 2. those in Holy Orders (p. 665). Lecherous Priests are like a free Bull in a town, and they eat raw flesh of folk's wives and daughters (p. 666); 3. by man and wife copulating for pleasure only (p. 667); 4. copulation with kinsfolk, spiritual (or godchildren) or fleshly (blood relations). 5. the abominable unmentionable sin; 6. Pollution, of 3 kinds: 1. too rank humours; 2. weakness (p. 667); 3. evil thoughts (p. 668).

The Remedy for Lechery (p. 668): I. Chastity and Continence.

1. in Marriage. (The true effect of Marriage. One husband to have one wife (p. 668). How a man should behave to his wife (p. 669). How the wife should be subject to her husband (p. 669), and be moderate in behaviour, discreet in words, &c. (p. 669-70). The 3 causes for which man and wife may copulate (p. 670): *a.* begetting of children; *b.* to pay the mutual debt of their bodies; *c.* to avoid lechery (p. 670). The 4th cause, pleasure, is deadly sin (p. 670-71).)
2. In Widowhood; 3. Virginity (p. 671).

II. Special avoidance of causes of lechery: *a.* eating and drinking; long sleeping; *b.* the person who'd tempt you (p. 671-72). (I wish I could tell you the Ten Commandments; but it's too high doctrine (p. 672).) [End of *Confession*, § 1, *c.*]

Sin is in heart, mouth, deed, by the 5 Wits (p. 672).

§ 1.*b.* (see p. 615-16.) The 7 Circumstances that encrease or aggravate sins (p. 672). 1. the person who sins (male or female, &c.); 2. the kind of sin (fornication or homicide); 3. the place it was committed in (as in a church, by a priest) (p. 673); 4. for what motive; 5. the number of times it was committed; 6. by what temptation; 7. how it was committed; and all other circumstances (p. 674).

CONFESSION, § 2, § 3 (p. 674-79).

Profitable Confession, and its 4 (= 3) *Conditions* (p. 674):

1. sorrowful bitterness of heart (p. 674); its 5 signs: *a.* shamefastness (like the Publican's) (p. 675); *b.* humility; *c.* fulness of tears (p. 675); *d.* no hesitation (like the Magdalen) for shame; *e.* obedience to receive penance laid on you (p. 675).
2. speedy Confession (p. 676); its 4 Conditions: *f.* that it be well thought over; *g.* the greatness and number of sins must be understood; *h.* the sinner must be contrite, and *i.* avoid occasions of sins.
3. Shrift must be made to one man, not more (p. 676).

True Shrift, and its 10 *Conditions* (p. 677): 1. that it be of free will; 2. that it be lawful (both sinner and priest, Popish); 3. that it be not despairing of Christ's mercy; 4. that a man accuse himself only, and not another; 5. that it be not lying (accusing oneself of sins never committed) (p. 678); that it be by one's own mouth, and not by letter; 7. that the sin be not painted with fair words; 8. that the shrift be to a discreet priest; 9. that the shrift be not made for vain-glory, but for fear of Christ; 10. that the shrift be not made suddenly, for a joke (p. 678). You may be shriven more than once for the same sin; and should be houseld once a year (p. 679).

PART III (*no.* v. *continued, and no.* vi.).

SATISFACTION (THE 3RD REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 679—684).

In *α.* Alms. *β.* bodily punishment.

α. Alms and its three kinds (p. 679): 1. Contrition of heart. 2. Pity for one's neighbour's faults. 3. Giving good counsel to other's souls and bodies (food, visits in prison, burial). These Alms should be done privily, if possible (p. 680).

β. Bodily Punishment (Penance), of 4 *kinds:* 1. Prayers (chiefly of the Paternoster, whose expounding I leave to Masters of Theology) (p. 680). 2. Watching, and its 3 kinds: forbearing, *a.* meat and drink, *b.* worldly jollity, and *c.* deadly sin (p. 681). 3. Fasting, and its 4 kinds: Liberality to poor folk; spiritual gladness of heart; not grudging at fasting; reasonable eating. 4. Virtuous teachings, or Discipline: *a.* by word, writing, or example; *b.* by wearing hairshirts., &c., next your skin, scourging yourself, taking evils and injuries patiently (p. 682). [End of no. v. in Part i; p. 593.]

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vi. The 4 Things that disturb Penance [no. vi, or last §, of p. 593 at foot] (p. 682). 1. Dread, and its remedy. 2. Shame, and its remedy. 3. Hope: *a.* of long life, and *b.* consequent over-confidence in Christ's mercy (p. 683). 4. Wanhope, or Despair of Mercy; its 3 kinds: *x.* from great and long continued sin; *y.* from falls-back into sin; *z.* from not being able to persevere in goodness (p. 683).

The fruit of Penance (p. 683-4).

EPILOGUE.

The Author's Leave-taking, and Lament over, and Withdrawal of, his Sinful Books, &c. (p. 684-85).

[*There are no breaks in the MS. Tyrwhitt's are kept here to prevent slight differences in the texts throwing the Six-Text out of gear.*]

[*Arch. Seld. B.* 14, *leaf* 268, *Bodleian Library.*]

[And next folowyng bigynneth his tale.

[75] Oure swete lord god of heuen / that no man wol perisshe / but wol that we come alle to the knewleche of him / *and* to the blisful liff that is perdurable / [76] amonesteth vs bi the prophete Ierome that seith in this wise / [77] stondith vppon the weyes *and* seeth *and* axeth of olde pathes / that is to seie [1]of olde sentences / whiche is the good weye / [78] *and* walketh in that weye / *and* ye shulle fynde refresshynge / for youre soules // [79] Many ben the weyes spirituel that leden folke to oure lord ihesu criste *and* to the regne of glorie // [80] Of whiche weyes ther is a ful noble weye / *and* a ful couenable weye / whiche may not fayle to man ne to woman / that thorugh synne hath mysgoon / fro the right weye of Ierusalem celestial / [81] *and* this weie is cleped penaunce / of whiche men shulde gladly herken *and* enqueren / with al here herte / [82] to wete what is penaunce / *and* wherfore it is cleped penaunce / *and* in how many manere ben the accions of worchinge of penaunce / [83] *and* how many spicis ther ben of penaunce / *and* whiche thinges apperteyne *and* bihoven to penaunce / *and* whiche thinges distorben penance /

¶ Jerome. state super vias. &c.

¶ Ambrosius. [84] Seint Ambrose seith that penaunce is the pleynynge of man for the gilt that he hath don and no more to do any thing / for whiche him aught to pleyne / [85] And som Doctor seith / penaunce is the weymentynge of man that sorowith for his synne / *and* peyneth him-selff for he hath mys-doun / [86] penaunce with certeyne circumstaunce / is verry repentaunce of man that halt him-selff in sorow *and* other peyne for his giltes / [87] And for he shal be verry penitent / he shal first biwailen the synne that he hath doun / *and* stedfastly purposen in his herte to haue shrifft of mouthe / *and* to don satisfaccion / [88] *and* neuere to do thing for whiche him ought more to waile / or to compleyne / *and* to contenue in goode werkes / or ellis his repentaunce may nat availe / [89] For as seint Isidor seith / he is a Iaper *and* a gabber *and* no verry repentaunte / that efft-sone doth thing / for whiche him ought to repent [90] weping / and nought for to stinte to do synne / may not availe [91] but natheles men shulde hope / that at euery tyme that a man falleth be it neuere so offt / that he may arise thorugh penaunce if he haue grace / but certeynely [1]it is grete doute /

¶ Isodorus.

¶ Gregorie [92] ffor as seith seint Gregory / vnnethes ariseth he oute of his synne / that is charged with the charge of euel vsage / [93] And ther-fore repentyng folke that stinte for to synne / *and* forlete synne / or synne for-lete hem / Holy chirche holt hem seker of here saluacioun [94] And he that stinteth *and* verrily repenteth him in his last ende / Holy chirche yit hopeth his saluacion bi the grete mercy of oure lord ihesu for his repentaunce / but taketh the seker weye that is certeyne //

[95] And now sithen I haue declared yow whath thinge is penaunce / Now shulne ye vnderstonde that ther ben thre accions of penaunce / [96] The first is if a man be baptized after that he hath don

¶ Austyne synne / [97] seint Austyn seith / but he be penitent for his olde synful liff / he may nat bigynne / the newe

clene liff / [98] for certes if he be baptised withoute penaunce of his olde gilte he resceivith the marke of baptime / but not the grace ne the remission of his synnes / til he haue verry repentaunce // [99] Another defaute is this / that men don dedely synne / after that thei haue received baptime / [100] The thrid defaute is / that men fallen in venial synnes / affter here baptime /

¶ Austyne fro day to day / [101] therof seith̄ Seynt Austyne / that the penaunce of gode *and* humble folke is the penaunce of euery daie //

[102] The spices of penaunce ben thre / that oon of hem is solempne / Another comune / And the thride prive / [103] Thilke penaunce that is solempne is in two maners / as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente for slaughter of children / *and* suche manere thinge / [104] Another is whan a man

[1 Selden *extract ends*] hath̄ synned openly[1] [2]of which synne þe fame is openly

[2 Corpus *begins*] spoken in þe contre ¶ And þenne holy chirche by Iuggement destreigneþ him for to do peñance open. [105] Som penañce is þat prestes enioygnen me communly in certein caas as for to gon perauenture naked in pylgrimage or bare foot [106] ¶ Pruie penaunce is þilke þat men don alday for priue synnes of whiche we schryuen vs pryuyly and resceyuen priue penañce

[107] ¶ Now schalt þou vnderstande what byhoueþ and is necessarie to verray perfyte penaunce ¶ and þese standen on þre þinges [108] ¶ Contricioñ of herte ¶ Confessioñ of mouþ // and Satisfaccioñ [109] ¶ ffor which

¶ Gresostomus saiþ Ioh̄n Gresostomus ¶ Penitence destreigneþ man to accepte benignely euery peyne þat is him enioyned wiþ contricion of herte and schrift of mowþ wiþ satisfaccioñ and in werching of alle maner humilite [110] ¶ And þis is fruytful penytence aȝein þre þinges in whiche we wrapþen oure lord ihesu crist [111] þis is to sayn by delyt/ in þenking By rechelesnesse in speking ¶ By wicked synful worching [112] ¶ And aȝeins þise

wikkede gultes is penitence þat may be likened vnto a tre
[113] ¶ The rote of þis tre is contricioñ þat huydeþ him in þe herte of him þat is verray repentañt Right as þe roote of a tree huydeþ him in þe erþe [114] ¶ Of þe roote of contricioñ springeþ a stalke þat bereþ braunches and leues of confessioñ and fruyt of satisfaccioñ [115] ¶ ffor whiche crist saiþ in þe gospelle Doþ digne fruyt of penitence ¶ ffor by þis fruyte may men knowe þis tree and nouȝt by þe roote þat is hidde in þe herte of a man ne by þe braunches ne by þe leeues of confessioñ
¶ Textus [116] ¶ And þerfore oure lord ihesu crist saiþ þus ¶ By þe fruyt of hem schuln ȝe knowe hem. [117] of þis roote springeþ a seed of grace þe which seed is mooder of sikernesse and þis seed is egre and hoot [118] ¶ þe grace of þis seed springeþ of god þorough þe remembrañce of þe day of doome and on þe peynes of helle [119] ¶ Of þis matiere saiþ Salamon ¶ þat in þe drede of god man forleteþ his synne [120] ¶ The hete
¶ Salomon of þis seed is þe loue of god and þe desirynge of þe ioye perdurable [121] þis hete draweþ þe herte of man to god and doþ him hate his synne [122] ¶ ffor soþly þer is no þing þat sauoureþ so wel a childe as þe mylk of his norice ¶ ne no þing is to him more abhominable þen þilke mylk whan it is medled wiþ oþer mete [123] ¶ Right so synful man þat loueþ his synne him semeþ þat it is to him most sweete / of any þing [124] ¶ but fro þat tyme þat he loueþ sadly oure lord ihesu crist and desireþ þe lyff perdurable þer nys to him more abhominable [125] ¶ ffor soþe þe lawe of god is þe loue of god ¶ ffor which
dauid .dauid. þe prophete saiþ ¶ I haue loued þy lawe [1]and hated wikkednesse & haten. he þat loueþ god kepeþ his lawe and his word [126] ¶ This tree saugh þe prophete Danyel in spirit vpon þe auysioñ of Nabugodonosor when he counseiled him to do penitence [127] ¶ Penaunce is þe tre of lyf to hem þat it resceyuen And he þat haldeþ him

verray penitent' is blessed after þe sentence of' Salomon. Salomon

[128] ¶ In þis penitence or contricioñ man schal vnderstonde .iiij. þinges: þat' is to say what' is contricioñ. And whiche ben þe causes þat' meuen a man to contricioñ and how he schulde be contrite and what' contricioñ avayled to þe soule [129] þanne it' is þus þat' contricioñ is þe verray sorwe þat' a man resceyueþ in his herte for his synnes wiþ sadde purpos to schryuen him' and to do penaunce / and neuer more to don synne [130] and þis sorwe schal ben in þis maneres as saiþ Seint' Bernard ¶ hit' schal be greuous and heuy and ful Bernardus scharp and poynañt' in herte [131] ¶ ffirst' for a man haþ agilt' his lord and his creatour ¶ And more scharp and poynañt' for he haþ agult' his fader celestial [132] ¶ And 3et' more scharp and poynañt ¶ ffor he haþ wraþþed and agilt' him þat' bought' him þat' with his precious blood haþ deliuered vs fro þe bandes of' synne and fro þe cruelte of' þe deuel and fro þe peynes of' helle

[133] ¶ These causes þat' oughten to meuen a man to contricioñ ben vj ¶ ffirst' a man schal remembre him of' vj. causes his synnes [134] but' loke þat þilke remembrance be to him no delyte by no wey: but' gret' schame & sorwe for his gulte ¶ ffor Iob saiþ ¶ Synful men don Iob werkes worþy of' confessioun'. [135] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Ezechie ¶ I wol remembre me alle þe 3eres of' my lyff' Ezechiele in bitternesse of' myn herte ¶ [136] And god saiþ in þapocalips ¶ Remembreþ 3ow fro whennes þat' 3e ben Apocalips falle ¶ ffor biforn þat' tyme þat' 3e synned 3e were þe children of' god and lymes of' þe regne of' god [137] ¶ But' for 3oure synne 3e ben waxe þralles and foule and membres of' þe feende / hate of aungeles sclaundre of' holy chirche and foode of' þe false serpent' perpetuel mateere of' þe furye of' helle [138] ¶ and þat' more foul and abhominable ffor 3e trespassen so often tyme as doþ þe hound þat' torneþ to eten his spuyng' [139] and 3et'

ben ȝe foulere for ȝoure longe continaunce in synne and ȝoure synful vsage for whiche ȝe ben roten in ȝoure synne as a beeste in his dunge [140] Suche maner of þouȝtes maken a man haue schame for his synne
Ezechiel and no delite as god saiþ by þe *pro*phete Ezechiel [141] ¶ ȝe schuln remembre ȝow of ȝoure weyes and þey schuln displese ȝow sopely ¶ Synnes ben þe weyes þat leden folk to helle

[142] ¶ The secounde cause that oughte to make a man to haue disdeyne of synne is þis þat as saiþ seint
Petrus petre who so [1]doþ synne is þralle of synne and synne putteþ a man in gret þraldom [143] and *per*fore saiþ þe *pro*phete Ezechiele I wente sorwful in desdeyn of myself Certes wel aughte a man haue disdeyne of synne and wiþdrawe him fro þat
Seneka þraldom and vilenye [144] ¶ And lo what saiþ Seneca in þis matiere he saiþ þus Though I wiste þat neyþer god ne *man* ne schulde neuere knowen it/ ȝet wolde I haue disdeyne for to do synne. [145] And þe same Seneka seiþ ¶ I am born to grettere þinges þan to be þralle to my body. [146] More þralle may no man ne no wo*m*man make of his body þan ȝeue his body to synne [147] ¶ And were it þe foulest cheerl or þe foulest wo*m*man þat lyueþ and lest of value ȝet is he chaⁿged and most foule and more in seruitute [148] euer fro þe heiher degre þat man falleþ þe more is he þralle and more vnto god and to þe worlde vile and abhominable [149] ¶ O goode god wel aughte men haue disdeyne of synne. seþþen þat þurgh synne þer he was free now is he maked bonde / [150] and *per*fore seiþ seint austyn ¶ If þou haue desdeigne of þy *seruañt*/ if he agilt or synned. haue þou þanne disdeyne þat þou þi self schuldest do synne [151] Take reward of þy value þat þou ne be to foul to þin value ne self [152] ¶ Allas wel oughten þey þanne haue disdeyn to be

*ser*uantȝ and þralle to synne and sore ben aschamed of hemself [153] ¶ þat god of his endeles goodnesse haþ set hem in heih astate or ȝeuen hem wiþ strengþe of body hele. beaute. *pro*sperite / [154] and boughte hem fro þe deth wiþ his herte blood þat þay so vnkyndely aȝeins his gentilnesse quyten him so vileynesly to slaughter of here owne soules [155] ¶ O goode god ȝe wo*m*men þat ben of so gret beaute Remembreth ȝou of þe pro*u*erbe of Salamon ¶ he seiþ ¶ Salamon [156] he likeneþ a fair wo*m*man þat is a fool of hire body y-like to a rynge of golde þat werith in þe groyne of a sowe [157] ¶ ffor right as a sowe wroteþ in eue*r*y ordure so wroteþ sche hire beaute in stynkynge ordure of synne

[158] ¶ The þridde cause þat oughte to meuen a man ¶ iij^a causa to contricioñ is drede of þe day of doome and of þe horrible peynes of helle [159] ¶ ffor as seint Ierom saiþ ¶ Ieronimus ¶ At eue*r*y tyme þat me remembreþ of þe day of doome I quake. [160] ffor whan I ete or drinke or do what so I do: euere semeþ me þat þe trompe sowneþ in my*n* eere. [161] Riseþ vp þat ben deede and comeþ to þe Iuggeme*n*t [162] of goode god mechel aughte a man to drede such a Iuggeme*n*t þere as we schuln ben alle as seiþ seint Poule byfore þe strete of oure lord ih*es*u crist [163] wher as he schal maken a gene*r*al congregacioñ wher as no man may ben absent [164] ffor certes þere ne auayleþ non essoyne ne excusacion [165] And nouȝt only þat oure defautes schullen ben y-Iuged ¶ but eek þat alle oure werkes schuln openly ben knowen [166] and as þat saiþ Seint bernard. þer ne Bernardus schal no pledynge auayle ne no sleighte we schullen ȝeuen rekenyng of eue*r*y ydel word [167] ¶ Ther schuln we haue a Iugge þat may nought / be deceyued ne corupt. And why: ffor certes alle oure þoughtes ben discouered as to him ne for prayere. ne for meede he wil not ben corrupte [168] ¶ And *per*fore saith Salamo*n* ¶ The wraþþe of god Salamon wol nought ben corupte And *per*fore saith Salamo*n* þe wreche

of' god ne wol nought' spare no wight' for praier ne for ȝifte
¶ And þerfore at' þe day of' doom þer nys non hope to eskape
Anselmus [169] Wherfore as seiþ Anselme ¶ fful gret' anguyssche schuln þe synful folk' haue at' þat' tyme [170] ¶ Ther schal be þe sterne and þe wroth Iuge sitte aboue And vnder him þe orrible putte of' helle to destruye him þat' mot' byknowe his synnes whiche synnes openly ben schewed byforn god and biforn euery creature [171] and on þe lift' syde moo deeueles þan þe herte may þinke for to harye and to drawe þe sinful soules to þe pyne of' helle [172] and with Inne þe hertes of' folk' schal be þe bytyng' Conscience ¶ And wiþoute forþ schal be þe world al brennyng' [173] ¶ Whider schal þenne þe wrecched synful soule fflee to huyde him? Certes he may nouȝt' huyde him. he moste come forþ and schewe him [174] ¶ ffor certes as saiþ seint' Ierom // The erþe schal caste him out' of' him and þe see also and þe aier also þat' schal ben ful of' þondir' clappes and lightenynges [175] ¶ Now soþly who so wol remembre him of' þese þinges? I gesse þat' his synnes schal nought' turne him in to delyte but' to gret' sorwe for drede of' þe peyne of' helle [176] and þer-
Iob. fore saiþ Iob to god ¶ Suffre lord þat' I may a while bywayle and wepe er I go and weepe wiþouten retournyng' to þe derke lande couered wiþ þe derknesse of' deþ [177] to þe land of' mysese and of' derkenesse where as is schadewe of' deth wher as þer nys non oþer ordinañce but' grisly drede þat' euer schal laste [178] ¶ Lo heere may ȝe seen þat' Iob preyede respite a while
exemplum to bywepe and wayle his trespas ¶ ffor sooþly oo day of' respite is bettre þan alle þe tresour of þis world [179] ¶ And for as moche as man may quyte himself' biforn god by penitence in þis world and nought' by tresour ¶ þerfore schulde he preye to god to ȝiue him respyt' a while to byweepen and byweylen his trespas // [180] ¶ ffor certes al þe sorwe þat' a man mighte make fro þe Begynnyng'

of' þe world nys but' alytel þing' at' þe regarde of' þe sorwe of' helle [181] ¶ The cause why þat' Iob clepeþ helle þe lond of' derknesses: [182] vnderstondeth' þat' he clepeþ it' lande of' erþe ¶ ffor it is stable and neuer schal faile [1]derknes ¶ ffor he þat' is in helle haþ defaute of' light' material [183] ¶ ffor certes þe derke light' þat' schal come out' of' þe fuyre þat' euer schal brenne schal turne / him al to peyne ¶ þat' is in helle ffor it' scheweþ him to þe Orible deueles þat' him tormenten [184] couered wiþ þe derknesse of' deþ [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . [185] . . .
no gap in the MS.] ben þe synnes þat' þe wreechede man haþ don whiche þat' distourben him to se þe face of' god Right' as a derk' clowde bitwixen hous and þe sonne. [186] lond of' myssese by cause þat' *per* ben þre maneres of' defautes aȝeins þre þinges þat folk' of þis world han in þis *present* lyf' þat' is to say honoures delices and richesse [187] aȝeins honour han þey in helle / schame and confusiōn [188] ¶ ffor wel ȝe wite þat' men clepen honour þe reuerence þat' men don to man ¶ But' in helle is non honour ne reuerence ¶ ffor certes nomore reuerence schal be do to a king' þan to a knaue [189] ¶ ffor which god saiþ by þe *prophete* Ieremie ¶ Thilke folk' þat' me despysen schuln ben in despite [190] ¶ Honour is eek' cleped gret' worschipe þer schal no wight' seruen oþer ¶ But' of' harme and torment. hono*ur* is eek' cleped gret' dignite and heighnesse ¶ But' in helle schullen þey ben alle fortroden of' deueles [191] as god saiþ ¶ þe Orrible deueles schuln gon & comen vpon þe heedes of' dampned folk' ¶ And þis is for as meche as þe heyer þat' þey weren in þis *present'* lyff/: þe more schuln þey ben abated and defouled in helle [192] ¶ aȝeins þe riche of' þis world schullen þey haue mysese of' pouerte and þis pouert' schal be .iiij. .þinges [193] ¶ In defaute of' tresour of' which

textus Ieremie /

exemplum

dauid. Dauid saiþ ¶ The riche folk' þat' enbraceden and Oneden in al here herte to tresour of' þis world schullen slepe / in þe slepyng' of' deþ as no þing' schuln þey fynden in here handes of' alle here tresour [194] ¶ And more ouer þe myseyse of' helle schal ben in defaute of' mete & drinke [195] ffor god saiþ þus by moyses ¶ þey schuln be wasted wiþ hunger and þe briddes of' helle schuln deuoure him wiþ bitter deþ and þe galle of þe dragoñ [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] here morselle [196] and forþer ouer here mysayse schal ben in defaute of' cloþing' ¶ ffor þey schuln be naked in body as of' cloþing' saue þe fuyre in whiche þey brenne and o*þer* filþes [197] and naked schuln þey ben of' soule of' alle maner ver*tues* which þat' is þe cloþing' of' soule ¶ Where be þenne þe gay robes and þe softe schetes and þe smale schertes. [198] lo what saiþ god of' hem by þe pro*phete*. Isaye ¶ That' vnder hem schuln be strawed mouthes ¶ and here couertours schuln ben of' wormes of' helle [199] ¶ and fur*þer* ouer here mysayse schal ben in defaute of' freendes ¶ ffor he is nought' pouere þat' haþ goode freendes ¶ But' þer is no freend [200] ¶ ffor neiþer god ne creature schal be frend to hem and euerych of' hem schal haten oþer [1]wiþ dedly hate [201] ¶ þe sones of' þe doughtren schullen rebellen aȝeins fader and mooder and kynredes aȝein kynrede and chyden and despisen euerich of' hem oþer boþe day and nigħt' as god saiþ by þe pro*phete*. Michias. [202] and þe louynge children þat' whilom loueden so fleissly euerich oþer ¶ Wolden euerich of' hem eten oþer if' þay migħte [203] ¶ ffor how scholde þey louen hem to gydere in þe peynes of' helle ¶ Whan þey hateden euerich of' hem o*þer* in þe pro*sperite* of' þis lyf' [204] ¶ ffor truste wel here fleisschly loue was deedly hate as saiþ þe pro*phete* .*dauid*. ¶ Who so þat' loueþ wikkednesse he hateþ his soule [205] ¶* And who so hateþ his owen soule ¶ certes he may loue non o*þer* wigħt'

dominus per moysen

Isaye

dauid

in no manere [206] ¶ And þerfore in helle is no frendschipe ¶ but euer þe more fleisshly kynredes þat ben in helle: þe more cursyng. þe more chydyng and þe more dedly hate þer is among hem [207] ¶ and furþer ouer þey schullen haue defaute of alle maner delites ¶ ffor why delices ben þe appetites of þe .v. wittes ¶ as sight. heeryng. smellyng. Sauoryng. and touching. [208] but in helle here sighte schal be ful of derknesse and of smoke and ful of teeres and here heerynge ful of waymentynge and of gruntynge of teeþ as saiþ ihesu crist [209] here nose þrulles schuln ben ful of stynke ¶ And as saiþ Isaye þe prophete ¶ here sauorynge schal be ful of bitter galle [210] and touching of here body ycouered wiþ fuyre þat neuer schal be quenched And wiþ wormes þat neuere / schullen deyen as god saiþ by þe mouþ of Isaye [211] ¶ And for as moche as þey schuln nouȝt wene þat þey may deyen for peyne and by here deþ flee fro peyne þat may þey vnderstonde in þe word of Iob þat saiþ. þer as is þe schadewe of deþ [212] ¶ Certes a schadewe haþ þe liknes of þe þing of which it / is schadewe ¶ but schadewe nys nought þe same þing of which it is schadewe [213] ¶ right so fareþ þe peyne of helle hit is y-like deþ for þe anguyssche orrible And why ¶ ffor it peyneþ hem euere as þough men schullen deyen anon But certes þey schuln nought deyen [214] ¶ ffor as saiþ seint Gregory to wrecchede Caytyfs synful schal ben deþ wiþouten deþ and ende wiþouten ende ¶ And defaute wiþouten faylinge [215] ¶ ffor here deþ schal alway lyue ¶ And here ende schal euere more begynne. and here defaute schal nought faile [216] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Seint Iohn euaungelist ¶ They schullen folwe deþ and þey schuln nought fynden him ¶ and þey desiren to deye and deþ schal flee fro hem [217] ¶ And eek Iob saiþ þat in helle is non ordre of reule. [218] and al be it so þat god haþ created alle þing in right ordre and no þing wiþ-

Ihesus textus

Isaye

Iohannes euaungelista

Iob

outen ordre ¶ But' alle þinges ben ordeigned [1]and nombred ¶ 3et naþeles þey þat' ben dampned ben no þing' in ordre ne holden non ordre [219] ¶ ffor þe erþe schal bere hem no fruyt' [220] ffor as þe *prophete* saiþ Dauid. god schal destruye þe fruyt' of' þe erthe as fro hem Ne water schal 3eue hem no moysture ne þe aier no refreissching'. ne fuyr no lig̃t' [221] ¶ ffor as saiþ seint' Basile ¶ The brennyng' of' þe fuyr of' þis world schal god 3euen in helle to hem þat' ben dampned [222] ¶ But' þe lig̃t and þe clernesse schal be 3ouen in to heuene to his children ¶ Right' as þe goode man 3eueþ fleissh̃ to his children and bones to his houndes [223] ¶ And for þey schullen haue non hope to eschape saiþ
Iob Iob. at' þe laste þ*at* þer schal horrour and grisly drede dwelle wiþouten ende [224] ¶ horrour is alway drede of' harme þat' is to come. and þis drede schal e*uer*e dwelle in þe hertes of' hem þat' ben dampned ¶ And *per*fore han þay lorne alle here hope for .vij. causes [225] ¶ ffirst' for god þat' is here Iuge schal be wiþouten *mer*cy to hem. ne þey may nought' please him ne non of' his halwes ne þey may 3yue no þing' for here raunsoñ [226] ne þay haue no voys / to speke to him. Ne þey may nou3t' flee fro peyne. ne þay haue no goodnesse in hem þat' þay may schewe to delyu*er*e hem fro peyne
Salomon [227] And *per*fore saiþ Salo*mon* ¶ The wikkede man deyeþ. and whan he is deed: he schal haue non hope to eskape fro peyne [228] ¶ Who so schame wel wolde vnderstande þese peynes and beþinke him wel þat' he haþ disserued þilke peynes for his synnes Certes he schulde haue more talent' to syke and to wepe. þen for to syngen and to pleye [229] ¶ ffor as seiþ Salo*mon* ¶ Who so þat' hadde þe science for to knowe þo peynes þat' ben establissched and ordeyned for synne: he wolde make sorwe. [230] þilke science as seiþ seint' austy*n* makeþ a man to weymenten in his herte.

iiij*um* *capitulum* [231] ¶ The .iiij^e. poynt' þat' oughte make a man

haue contricioñ is. þe sorweful remembraunce of' þe good þat/ he haþ lost/ to doon heere in erþe and eek' þe good þat' he haþ lorn [232] ¶ Soþly þe goode werkes þat' he haþ lost'! eyþer þey ben þe goode werkes þat' he wroughţ' er he felle in to dedly synne ¶ Or elles þe goode werkes þat' he wroughţ' whil he lay in synne [233] ¶ Soþly þe goode werkes þat' he dide biforn þat' he fylle in synne ben alle mortefied and astonyed and dulled by þe ofte synnynge // [234] þat' oþer goode werkes þat' he wroughte whiles he lay in synne þey ben outerly deede as to þe lyff' /perdurable in heuene [235] ¶ þenne þilke goode werkes þat' ben mortefyed by often synnyng' whiche goode werkes he dide whiles he was in charite ne mowen neuere quyken aȝein wiþouten verray penytence [236] ¶ And þerof' saith god by þe mouþ of' Ezechielle þat' is [1]þe rightful man retourne aȝein from his rightwisnesse and to wirche wikkednesse schal he lyue [237] nay. ffor alle þe goode werkes þat' he haþ wrouȝt / ne schuln neuer ben in remembrance ffor he schal deye in his synne [238] ¶ And vpon þilke chapitre seiþ Seint' Gregori þus þat' we schulde vnderstande þis principally [239] þat' whenne we doon deedly synne it' is for nought þanne to reherse or drawe in to memorie þe goode werkes þat' we han wroughţ' byforne [240] ¶ ffor certes in þe werkinge of' dedly synne / þer is no triste / to no good werk' þat' we han don toforne þat' is to sayn as for to haue þerby þe lyff' perdurable in heuene [241] [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] whan we han contricioñ [242] ¶ But' soþely þe goode werkes þat' men don whiles þat' þey ben in dedly synne for as moche as þey weren don in dedly synne þey may neuer quiken aȝein [243] ¶ ffor certes þing' þat' neuer haþ lyff' may neuere quyke ¶ And naþeles al be it' þat' þey ne auailen nought' to han þe lyff' perdurable! ȝet' auailen

þey to abreggen of þe peyne of helle or elles to geten temperal richesse [244] ¶ Or elles þat god wol þe raþere enlumyne and lightne þe herte of þe synful man to han repentañce. [245] and eek þey auaylen for to vsen a man to doon good werke þat þe feende haue þe lesse power of his soule [246] ¶ and þus þe curteyse lord ihesu crist ne wol þat no good werk be loste ¶ ffor in somwhat it schal auayle [247] ¶ But for as moche þe goode werkes þat men don whiles þey ben in good lijf ben al mortefyed by synnè folwynge ¶ And eek seþenes alle þe goode werkes þat men doon whiles þey ben in dedly synne ben outrely deede as for to haue þe lyff perdurable: [248] wel may þat man þat no good werk ne doþ Synge þilke newe freissche song. Iay tout perdu moñ temps & moñ labour [249] ¶ ffor certes synne byreueþ a man goodnesse and nature and eek þe goodnesse of grace [250] ¶ ffor soþe þe grace of þe holy gost fareþ as fuyr þat may nouȝt ben ydel ffor fuyr fayleþ anon as it forleseþ his wirchinge [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [251] þenne leseþ þe synful man þe goodnesse of glory þat oonly is behigñt to goode men þat labouren and werken [252] ¶ Wel may he be sory þenne þat oweth alle his lyff to god as lange as he lyueth haþ lyued and eek als longe as he schal lyue þat no goodnesse ne haþ to paye wiþ his dette to god to whom he oweþ alle his lyff [253] ¶ ffor truste wel he schal ȝiue acountes as saiþ seint Bernard of alle þe goodes þat han ben ȝouen him in þis present lyff / and how he haþ hem dispended [254] nought so moche þat / þer schal nought perissche an heer of his heede ne a moment of an houre ne schal not perissche of his tyme þat he ne schal ȝiue of hit a rekenyng

v^a causa [255] ¶ The v^te. þing þat oughte meue a man [1]to contricioñ is remembrance of þe passioñ þat oure lord ihesu crist suffred for oure synnes [256] ¶ ffor as saiþ seint Bernard ¶ Whil þat I lyue I schal haue remem-

brance of þe trauailes þat oure lord ihesu crist suffred in prechinge [257] his werynesse in trauaillynge. his temptacioñs whan he fasted his longe wakinges when he prayed his teeres when þat he wepte for pite of good peple [258] ¶ þe woo and þe schame and þe filthe þat men seyden to him ofte foule spittyng þat men spitten on his face ¶ of þe buffettes þat men ȝeuen him ¶ of þe foule mouthes and of þe repreues þat men to him sayden [259] ¶ Of þe nayles wiþ þe whiche he was nayled to þe cros and of alle þe remenañt of his passioñ þat he suffrede for my synnes and no þing for his gilte [260] ¶ And ȝe schuln vnderstonde þat in mannes synne is euery maner ordre of ordinance turned vp so doun [261] ffor it is soþ þat god and resoñ and sensualite and þe body of man ben so ordeyned þat euerich of þise. .iiij. þinges/ schulde haue lordschipe ouer þat oþer [262] and þus god schulde haue lordschipe ouer resoñ and resoñ ouer sensualite and sensualite ouer þe body of man [263] ¶ And soþly whan man synneþ: al þis ordre of ordinañce is turned vp so doñ [264] ¶ And þerfore þanne for as moche as þe resoñ of man wol nought be subget ne obeissant to god þat is his lord by right: þerfore leeseþ it þe lordschipe þat it schulde haue in sensualite and eeke ouer þe body of man [265] ¶ And whi ¶ ffor sensualite rebelleþ þanne aȝein resoñ And by þat wey leseþ resoñ his lordschipe ouer sensualite and ouer þe body [266] ¶ ffor right as resoñ is rebelle to god Right so is boþe sensualite rebel to resoñ and þe body also [267] ¶ And certes þis ordiñance and þis rebellioñ oure lord ihesu crist aboughte vpon his precious body ful dere herkeneþ in which wise [268] ¶ ffor as meche þanne is resoun rebelle to god: þerfore is man worþi to haue sorwe and to be deed [269] ¶ This suffred oure lord ihesu for man after þat he hadde be betrayed of his disciple and destreyned &

bounde so þat þe blood brast out at euery nayl of his handes as seiþ seint Austyn [270] ¶ And forþermore for as moche as resoñ of man wol nought daunte sensualite whenne it may ¶ Therfore is man worþy to haue schame and þis suffrede oure lord ihesu crist for man when þey spetten in his visage / [271] ¶ And furþer more for as moche þanne as þe caytiff body of man is rebelle boþe to resoñ and to sensualite ¶ þerfore it is worþy þe deþ [272] ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihesu crist for man vppon þe crosse where as þer was no part of his body fre wiþouten gret peyne and bitter passioñ / [273] and al þis suffrede ihesu crist þat neuer forfeted [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ To mechil am I peyned for þe same þinges [1] þat I neuer deserued and to mochil defouled for frendschipe þat man is worþy to haue. [274] And þerfore may þe synful man wel say as saiþ seint Bernard. Acursed be þe bitternes [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [275] ¶ ffor certes after þe diuers discordaunces of oure wikkednesse was þe passioñ of Ihesu crist y-ordeyned in diuerse þinges [276] as þus Certeȝ synful mannes soule bytraysed of þe deuel by coueytise of temperel prosperite / and scorned by disceyte when he cheseþ flesschly delites / and ȝet is he tormented by inpacience of aduersite ¶ And bispette ¶ By seruage in subiectioun of synne ¶ And atte laste it is slayn fynally [277] for this disordynañce of synful man was ihesu crist first bytrayed ¶ And after þat was he bounde þat came for to vnbynde vs of synne and of peyne [278] ¶ Thanne was he by-scorned þat only schulde be honoured in alle þinges of alle þinges [279] þenne was his visage þat oughte be desired to be seyn of alle mankynde in which visage aungeles desiren to loken. vileynesly byspette [280] ¶ Thenne was he scourged þat noþing hadde gilt ¶ and fynally þenne was he crucified & slayn [281] ¶ Thenne was he acompliced þe

wordes of Isaye ¶ he was wounded for oure mysdedes and defouled by oure vileynies [282] ¶ Now sepenes þat ihesu crist took vpon himself þe peyne of alle oure wickednesses: Mochil oughte synful man bywepe and bywayle þat for his synnes goddes sone of heuene schulde alle þis peyne endure [283] ¶ The sixte þing þat oughte meue a man to contricioñ is þe hope of .iij. þinges. þat is to sayn. forzeuenes of synne [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] and þe glorie of heuene wiþ þe which god schal guerdoñ man for his goode deedes· [284] ¶ and for as moche as ihesu crist zeueþ vs þese ziftes of his largesse and of his souereyn bounte: þerfore is he cleped Ihesus nazarenus rex iudeorum [285] Ihesus is for to sayn sauyour of sauacioñ on whom meñ schuln hope to haue forzeuenesse of synnes which þat is proprely sauacioun of synnes [286] ¶ And þerfore sayde þe aungel to Ioseph ¶ þou clepest his name ihesus þat schal saue his poeple of here synnes [287] ¶ And her of seiþ seint Petre ¶ Ther nys non oþer name vnder heuene þat is zoue to any man by which a man may be saued but only by ihesus [288] nazarenus is as moche to seyn as florissching in which a man schal hope þat he þat zeueþ him remissioñ of synnes schal ziue also him grace wel to do ¶ ffor in þe flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comynge. and in forziuenesse of synnes is hope of grace wel to do [289] ¶ I was at þe dore of þin herte / saiþ iñc and cleped for to entre ¶ he þat openeþ to me schal haue forziuenesse of synne / [290] I wol entre to him by my grace and soupe wiþ him by þe goode werkes þat he schal doon whiche werkes ben þe foode of god and he schal soupe with[1] [[2]me bi the grete ioye / that shal be yove to him ‖ [291] Thus shal man hope for his werkes of penaunce / god sholde yeve him his regne as he bihoteth him / in the gospel /

vj[a] causa de contricione /

[1 Corpus MS. ends] [2 Arch. Seld. B. 14, leaf 275, back, for Corpus MS.]

[292] Now shal man vnderstonde / in which

manere shal be his contricion || I seie that hit shal be vniuersale & totale / this is to seine a man shal be verry repentaunt / [1]for alle his synnes that he hath̄ done / in delite of his thoughṫ for delite is ful perilous / [293] ffor ther ben two manere of consentynges / that oon of hem is cleped consenting of affeccioun / whan a man is meved to do synne / & delitetḥ him longe for to thenke on that synne / [294] he hath reson that perceivetḥ wel that hit is synne ageynste the lawe of god / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] al thoughṫ his reson ne consente nat to do the synne in dede / [295] yit seine somme doctours / that suche delite that duellitḥ longe is ful perilous / al be it neuer so lite / [296] And also a man sholde sorowe for al that euer he hath̄ desired ayeines the lawe of god with perfite consentynge of resoun / ffor ther-of is no doute / that hit is dedly synne / in consentynge / [297] ffor certes ther is no dedly synne / but hit is first in man-is thoughte / & after that in his delite / and so forthe in-to consentynge / & in-to dede / [298] wherfore I seie that many men repente hem neuere of suche thoughtes / & delites / ne neuere shriven hem of hit / but only of the dede || of grete synnes outwarde || [299] wherfore I seie that suche wikked delites / & wikked thoughtes / ben subtile begilours of hem that shullen be dampned / [300] More-ouere a man oughte to sorowe for his wikked wordes / as wel as for his wikked dedes || ffor certes the repentaunce of a singuler synne / and nought repent of al his other synnes or ellis repente him of alle his other synnes / & nat of a singuler synne / may nought availe || [301] ffor certes almyghti god is al good / And therfore he for-yevith al / or elles right nought / [302] ¶ Austyne. And herof seith seint Austyne / I wote certeynly [303] that god is enemy to euery synne / And how than he that observith. oo̊ synne shal he haue foryeuenesse of the

remenaunt of his other synnes / Nay / [304] And ferther ouere contricion sholde be wonder sorowful / & anguysshous / & therfore yevith him god pleynly his mercy / And therfore whan my soule was anguysshous withinne me / I had remembraunce of god / that my prayere myghte come to him / [305] fforther ouere contricion must be contenuel / & that man haue stedfast purpos to shriven him / & for to amende him of his liff / [306] ffor sothely whiles contricion lasteth man may [1]haue hope of foryeuenesse / And of this cometh hate of synne / that distroyeth synne in him selff / & eke in other folke / as to his powere / [307] ffor whiche seith Dauid / ye that louen god / hateth wikkednesse / ffor ¶ Dauid trusteth wel to love god / is for to love that he loueth / & hate that he hateth ‖

[308] The laste thing that men shulle vnderstonde in contricion is this / wherof avayleth contricion / I seye that somtyme contricion delyuereth a man from synne / [309] off whiche that Dauid seith / I seye quod Dauid ¶ Dauid that is to seie / I purposed fermely to shrive me and thow lord relesedist my synne / [310] And right so as contricion availeth nought withoute sadd purpos of shriffte / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] or satisfaccion withoute contricion / [311] And more-ouere contricion distroyeth the prison of helle / & maketh weyke & febleth the strengethes of the deueles / & restoreth the yiftes of the holy goste & of alle goode vertues / [312] & clensith the soule of synne / & delyuereth the soule fro the peyne of helle / & fro the companye of the deuel / & fro the seruage of synne / & restoreth to alle goodes espirituels / & to the companye of communyon of holy chirche / [313] And ferther-ouere hit makyth him that was whilom the sone of synne / & Ire / to ben the sone of grace / & alle these thinges ben preved bi holy writte / [314] And therfore he that wol sette his entent to these thinges / he were ful

wise / ffor sothe he sholde nought than in al his liff haue corage to synne / but yeve his body / & al his herte to the seruice of Ihesu criste / & therof don him homage / [315] ffor sothly oure swete lord Ihesu criste he sparith vs so debonerly in oure folies / that if he ne had pite of man-is soule / a sori songe myghte we alle synge /

Explicit prima pars penitencie / ¶ & sequitur secunda.

[316]

The secunde parte of penaunce / is confession / that is signe of contricion / [317] Now shulle ye vnderstonde what is confession / And whether hit oughte nedes to ben or noon / & whiche thinges ben couenable to verry confession /

[318] ffirst shalt thow vnderstonde that confession is verry shewynge of synnes to the preste / [319] That is to sey verry / that he mote confessen him / of alle the condicions that be-longen [1]to his synne / as ferforth as he can / [320] al mote be seide / & no thing excused ne hidde / ne for-wrapped / & nought auaunte him of his goode werkes / [321] And fer-ther-ouere it is necessarie to vnderstonde / whens that synnes springen / & how thei encresen / and whiche they ben

¶ Poule. [322] of the springyng of synnes / as seith seint Poule on this wise / That right as bi a man synne entred in-to this world first / & thorugh that synne deide / right so thilke deth entreth in-to alle men that synneden [323] And this man was Adam / bi whom the synne entred in-to this world / whan that he breke the commaundement of god / [324] And therfore he that first was so myghti / that he sholde nat haue deide / bi-cam suche oon that he most nedes deye / whether he wolde or noon / & al his progenye that is in this worlde / that in thilke manere synnen ‖ [325] Loke that in the estate of innocence / whan Adam & Eue

naked were in paradise / & nothing ne hadden shame of here nakednesse / [326] how that the serpent that was moste wyly of al other bestes that god had maked seide to the womman || Commaunded god to yow / ye sholde nought eten of euery tre in paradise / [327] The woman answerde / of the fruyte quod she of the trees in paradise we feden vs / but sothly of the fruyte of the tre that is in the myddel of paradise / god forbede vs / for to eten ne to touche it / lest perauenture we sholden deye / [328] The serpent seide to the woman / nay nay / ye shol not deye of deth / ffor sothe god wote / that what day ye eten therof youre eyghen shul open / & ye shul be as godes knowynge goode & harme / [329] The woman saw that the tre was goode to fedynge / & faire to the eyghe / & dilectable to the sighte / she toke of the fruyte of the tre & ete of it || & yaf it to hir housbond & he ete / And anoon the eyghen of hem bothe opened / [330] And whan that they knewe / that thei weren naked / thei sowed of fyge leves in manere of breches to hiden here membres || [331] Here may ye se that dedly synne hath first suggestion of the fende / as shewith here bi the adder / & affterward the delite of the flesshe / as shewith here bi Eua / And affter that the consentinge of the reson / as shewith bi Adam / [332] ffor trusteth [1] wel though so were that the fende tempted oon / that is to seie / the flesshe / And the flesshe had delite in the beaute of the fruyte defended || yit certes til that reson / that is to seie Adam consented to the etyng of the fruyte / yit stode thei in the highe state of Innocence || [333] Off thilke Adam toke we thilke synne origynal / for of him flesshely discended ben we alle / & engendred of vile & corrupte matire / [334] And whan the soule is put in-to oure body / right anoon is contracte original synne / And that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence / is afterward both peyne & synne / [335] And therfore ben we alle I-borne sones of

¶ Adam. Eua.

wrathe & of dampnacion p*er*durable / if it nere baptyme that we receiven / whiche bynemyth vs the culpe / but for sothe the peyne dwellith with vs / as the temptacion / whiche peyne hight concupiscence / [336] And this concupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed / or ordeyned in man / hit makith him coueite couetise of flesshely synne bi sight of his eyghen / and to erthely thinges / And eke coueitise of highnesse bi pride of herte /

[337] Now as for to speke of the first coueitise / that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres / that weren lawfully maked / & bi rightful iugement of god / [338] I seie for-asmeche as man is nought obeisaunt to god / that is his lord / Therfore is his flesshe to him disobeisaunte / thorugh concupiscence / [. . . . . [339] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] hit is impossible but he be distemp*er*ed somtyme / & noyede in his flesshe to synne / [340] & this thing may nought faile / as longe as he leueth / it may wexe feble & faile / bi v*er*tu of baptime / & bi the grace of god / thorugh penaunce / [341] but fully shal it neu*er*e quenche / that he ne shal som-tyme be meved in him silff || but if he were refreynede bi sikenesse / [1]of bi malifice of sorcerie / or colde drynkes / [342] ffor what seith seint Poule / The flesshe coueiteth ayeine the spirit / & the spirit ayeine the flesshe / thei ben so contr*ar*ie / & so striven / that a man may nought don alwey / as he wolde / [343] The same seith seint Poule / after his grete penaunce in wat*er* & in lande / In water bi night & bi daie in grete p*er*ile / & grete peyne / In lande in famyne / thruste / in colde and in [2]clothes wantynge / & ones stoned almost to the dethe [344] yit seide he alas I caytiff man / who shal delyuer me fro the prison of my caytiff body / [345] And seint Ierome whan he longe tyme had woned in deserte / where as he had no companye but bestes / where as he had

[1 *sic*]

¶ Poule.

¶ Ierome

no mete but erbes / & water to his drinke / ne no bedde but the naked erthe / ffor whiche his flesshe was blak as an Ethiopen for hete & nygħ distruyed for colde / [346] yit seide he that the brennynge of lecherie boiled in al his body / [347] wherfore I woote wel sekerly that thei ben disceived / that seine / that thei ne ben nought tempted in here body / [348] wittenesse of seint Iame thappostel / ¶ Iacobus. that seith that *euery* wigħt is tempted in his owne concupiscence / that is to seie / that *euery*che of vs hath matire & occasion to be tempted / of the norisshinge of synne that is in his body ‖ [349] And therfore seith seint Ioħn ¶ Iohn Euang. the Euangelist if that we seyne that we ben withouten synne we disceiven oure silff / & trouthe is nought in vs /

[350] Now shol ye vnderstonde in what man*ere* synne wexeth & encreseth in man ‖ The first thing is the norisshinge of synne / of ·whicħ I spak of biforne thilke flesshely concupiscence / [351] And after that cometh the suggestion of the Deuel / this is to seie the deuel-is bely / with whicħ he blowith in man / the fire of flesshely concupiscence / [352] And aft*er* that a man bithinketh him / whether he wol do or noon thilke thinge / to whicħ he is tempted ‖ [353] And than if a man with-stande / & weive the firste entisinge of his flessħ / & of the fende / than is hit no synne / And if so be that he do nat so / than felith he anoon / a flamme of delite / [354] & than is hit goode to be-ware & kepe him wel / or elles he wol falle anoon / in-to consentynge of synne / & than wol he do hit / if he may haue tyme and place ‖ [355] And of this matire seith Moyses bi ¶ Moyses. the deuel in this man*ere* / The fende seith I wol chace & pursue man bi wikked suggestiones / & I wol hente him / bi movynge or sterynge of synne / And I wol dep*arte* my prise or my preye bi deliberacion / & my lust shal be accomplesshed in delite / I wol drawe my swerde in consentynge / [356] ffor [1]certes right as a swerde dep*arteth* a thinge in two peces ‖ Right

so consentynge dep*ar*teth̄ god fro man / And than wol I sle him with myn honde / in dethe of synne / thus seith the fende / [357] ffor certes than is a man al dede in soule / and thus is synne complesshed bi temptacion / bi delite / & bi consentinge / and than is synne cleped actuel /

[358] Ffor sothe synne is in two man*er*es / outher it is venial synne / or dedly synne / Sothely whan man loueth̄ any creature / more than ih*es*u criste oure creatoure / than is it dedly synne / And venial synne is if man loue ih*es*u criste lesse than him oughte ‖ [359] ffor sothe the dede of this venial synne / is ful p*er*ilous / ffor hit amennseth̄ the loue that men sholde haue to god more & more / [360] And therfore if a man charge more him silff / with many suche venial sinnes / certes but if it so be / that he somtyme discharge him of hem bi shriffte / thei may ful lightly amennse in him al the loue / that he hath̄ to ih*es*u criste / [361] & in this wise skippith̄ venial synne / in-to dedly synne ‖ ffor c*er*tes the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial synnes / the more is he enclyned to falle in dedly synne / [362] And therfore lat vs not be necligent to
¶ prou*er*bium. discharge vs of venial synnes / ffor the p*rouer*be seith̄ That many smale makith a grete / [363] And herk*en* this ensample / A grete wawe of the see / cometh somtyme with so grete a violence / that hit drenchith the shippe /
prou*er*bium. [*in a late hand.*] And the same harme doth̄ somtyme / the smale dropes of water / that entren thorugh a litil crevise / in-to the thurroke / & in-to the botme of the shippe / if men be so necligent / that men ne discharge hem nought be tyme ‖ [364] And therfore al-though ther be a difference bitwene these two causes of drenchynge / algates the shippe is dreynte ‖ [365] Right so farith hit somtyme of dedly synne / & of anoyous venial synnes / whan thei multiplie in a man so gretly / that thilke worldly thinges that he loueth̄ / thorugh whiche he synneth venially / is as grete in his herte / as the loue of god or more / [366]

And therfore the loue of eu*er*y thinge / that is not bisette in god / ne don principally for godis sake / al-though a man loue it lasse than god / yit is it venial synne / [367] And dedly synne is / whan the loue of any thinge [1]weyeth in the herte of a man / as meche as the loue of god or more / [368] Dedly synne as seith seint Austyne ¶ Austyne is whan a man turneth his herte from god / whic[h]e that is verry souereyne bounte / that may nat chaunge / & yevith his herte to a thinge that may chaunge / & flitte || [369] And certes that is eu*er*y thinge saue only god of heuen || ffor sothe is / if that a man yeve his loue / the whiche that he owith al to god / with al his herte / vn-to a creature / certes as meche of his loue as he yevith [. . . .] to that creature / so meche he birevith from god / [370] & therfore doth he synne / ffor he that is dettour to god / ne yeldeth nought al his dette to god / that is to seine al the loue of his herte /

[371] Now sithen that a man vnderstondeth gen*er*ally whiche is venial synne || Than is it couenable to tellen of special sinnes whiche that many a man p*er*auenture demeth hem no synnes / ne shriven hem nat of the same thinges / & yit natheles thei ben synnes / [372] sothely as these clerkes writen / this [is][2] to seine / [2 a word (*is*?) erased here.] that eu*er*y tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than ¶ nota bene sufficeth to the sustenaunce of his body / in certeine he doth synne / [373] And eke whan he speketh more than hit nedith / it is sinne || Eke whan he herkeneth nought mekely the compleynte of the pore || [374] Eke whan he is in hele of body & wol nought faste / whan other men faste withouten cause resonable || Eke whan he slepeth more than him nedith || or whan he cometh bi thilke encheson late to chirche / or to other good werkes of charite / [375] Eke whan he vsith his wiff / withouten souereyne desire of engendrure to the honour of god / or for thentent to yelde to his wiff the the (*sic*) dette of his body / [376] Eke whan he wol nought visite the sike / or p*ri*soners whan he may ||

Eke if he loue wiff or childe or any worldly thinge / more than reson requirith / Eke if he flatre or blandisshe / more than him oughte / for any necessite ‖ [377] Eke if he amennseth or withdrawith the almes of the pore ‖ Eke if he apparaileth his mete more deliciously than nede is / or ete hit to hastily bi likerousnesse ‖ [378] Eke if he telle vanitees at the chirche or
¶ ydel wordes. in godes seruise / or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folie / or of vilonye / for he shal yelde accou[m]ptes of it at the daie of dome / [379] Eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do thinges / that he may not [1] performe ‖ Eke whan that bi lightnesse of folie misseieth or scorneth his neighbour / [380] Eke whan he hath any susspecion of thinge / there as he woote of it no sothfastnesse ‖ [381] These thinges & mo withouten nombre
¶ Austyne. ben synnes as seith seint Aústin

[382] Now shul men vnderstonde that al be it so / that noon erthely man may eschewe al venial synnes / yit may he refreyne him bi the brennynge loue that he hath to oure lorde Ihesu criste / & bi praiere / & bi confession / & other goode workes / so that it shal but litel greve / [383] ffor as seith seint Austyne ‖ If a man loue god / in suche manere / that al that euere he dothe is in the loue of god / or for the loue of god verrily ‖ ffor he brenneth in the loue of god ‖ [384] loke how meche meche that a drope of water that fallith in a furneys ful of fire anoyeth or grevith / so meche a venial synne is vn-to a man / that is perfite in the love of oure lord ihesu criste ‖ [385] Men may also refreyne venial synne / bi the resseivinge of the precious body of ihesu criste / [386] bi resseivinge eke of holy water / bi almes-dede / bi the general confession of the Confiteor at the masse / & at the Complyne / and bi blissinge of Busshopes / and of prestes & bi other goode werkes /

De septem peccatis mortalibus & eorum &c

[387] NOw is it bihouely thinge / to tellen whiche ben the .vij. dedly synnes / that is to seyne cheveteynes of synnes / but alle thei renne in Ooles / but in dyuers maners / Now ben thei cleped cheveteynes / for-as-meche as thei ben cheff / & of hem springen alle other synnes / [388] of the rote of these .vij. sinnes / than is pride the general rote of alle harmes / ffor of this rote springen certeine branches / as Ire / Enuye / accidie / or slouthe / Auarice / or couetise to comune vnderstonding / Gloteneye / & Lecherie / [389] And euerych of these cheff synnes hath his branches & his twigges / as shal be declared in here chapitres folwynge /

[*Of Pride, and its Twigs.*]

[390] And though so be that no man can vtterly telle the nombre of the twigges & of the harmes that comyn of pride / yit wol I shewe a parte of hem as ye shul vnderstonde [391] || There is Inobedience || Avauntynge / Ypocrisie || Despite || Arrogaunce / In[1]prudence || Swellinge of herte || Insolence || Elacion || [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] Partinacie || Veynglorie || & many a-nother twigge that I can nat declare || [392] Inobedient is he / that disobeyeth for dispite to the commaundement of god / & to his souereynes / & to his gostly fader || [393] Auauntour is he that bosteth of the harme or of the bounte / that he hath don / [394] ypocrisie is he that hideth him / to shewe him / suche as he is / and shewith him suche as he is not || [395] Dispitous is he that hath disdeine of his neighbours / that is to seine / of his euen cristen / or hath dispite to do / that him oughte to do || [396] Arrogaunt is he / that thinketh that he hath thilke bounte in him / that he hath nought / or

¶ Inobedient

¶ Auauntour

¶ Dispitous

¶ Arrogaunt.

weneth̄ that he sholde haue hem bi his desertes / or ellis that he weneth that he be that he nys nought / [397] Inpudent is he that for his pride hath̄ no shame for his symne || [398] Swelling of herte is he / whan a man reioyseth̄ him / of harme that he hath̄ don || [399] Insolent is he / that dispiseth̄ in his iugement alle other folke / as to the regarde of his value / & of his connynge / & of his spekynge / & of his berynge || [400] Elacion is / whan he may neither suffre to haue maister ne felawe || [401] Impacient is he / that wol nought be taughte ne vndernome of his vice / & bi striff werreth trouthe wetingly / & maynteneth his folie || [402] Contymax is he that thorugh his indignacion / is ayeins euery che autorite or power of hem that ben his souereynes || [403] Presumpcion is he / whan a man taketh an emprise / that him ought not to do / or ellis he may it not do / & that is called surquidrie || Irreuerent is whan a man doth̄ not honour / there-as him oughte to do / & waiteth to be reuerensed || [404] Pertynacy is whan a man defendith̄ his folie / & trusteth̄ to meche his owne witte || [405] Vayneglorie is for to haue pompe / & delite in temporel richesse / & glorifieth hem in worldly estates || [406] Iangelynge is / whan a man speketh to meche / to fore folke & clappeth̄ as a Mille / & taketh no kepe what he seith̄ . . .

¶ Inpudent
¶ Swellinge of herte.
¶ Insolent.
¶ Elacion
¶ Impacient
¶ Contymax
¶ Presumpcion
¶ Irreuerent
¶ pertynacy
¶ Vayneglorie
¶ Iangelynge.

[1][407] and yit is there a prive spice of pride / that waiteth̄ first to be halowed / er he wol be saluwed / al be he lasse worth̄ than that other is perauenture / & eke waiteth or desireth̄ to sitte or to go above / him in the weie / or kisse pax / or be ensensed / or go to offringe / to fore his neighboure || [408] & suche [. . .

. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] a proude desire to be magnified / & honoured bifore the peple ||

[409] Now ben ther two maners of pride / that oon of hem is withinne the herte of man / & that

other is withoute / [410] off whiche sothely the forseide thinges & mo than I haue seide apertynent to pride / that is in the herte of man / And therto other spices of pride ther ben withoute / [411] but natheles oon of these spices of pride is signe of that other || Right as the gay levesel at the tauernes is signe of the wyne / that is in the seler || [412] And this is in many thinges / as in speche / & in contenances / & in outrageous aray of clothinge / [413] ffor certes if it nadde be no synne / in clothinge / Criste wold nought so soone haue noted & spoke of the clothinge / of thilke riche man in the gospel || [414] And as seint Gregorie seith That precious clothe is coupable / for the derth of hit / & for his softenesse / & for his strangenesse / & for his disgisinesse / & for the superfluyte / or for the inordynaunte scantnesse / [. . . [415] ¶ Gregorie.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

[416] As to the first synne / that is in superfluyte of clothing whiche that makith hit so dere / to harme of the peple / [417] nat onely the coste of enbroudyng / the degise endentyng or barryng / owndyng / palyng / or bendynge / & semblable waste of clothynge / in vanite || [418] But ther is also costlewe furrynge in here gownes / so meche pounsyng of cheseles to make hooles / so meche daggynge of sheres / [419] forth with the superfluyte in lengthe of the forseide gownes / trailing in the donge / & in the myre / on hors & eke on foote / as wel of man / as of womman / that al thilke trailynge is verrily as in effecte wasted & consumed / thredbare & roten / with donge / rather than it is yoven to the pore / to grete damage of the forseide pore folke / [420] & that in sondry wise || this is to seie / the more that clothe is wasted / the more mot hit coste to the peple / for the scarsenesse || [421] [1]And forther-ouer if it so be that thei wolde yeven suche pounsed &

dagged clothinge / to the pore folke / it is nought conuenient to were for here estate / ne sufficeaunt to bete here necessite / to kepe hem from the distemperaunce of the colde firmament‖ [422] On that other side to speke of the disordinat scantnesse of clothing / as ben these cutted sloppes or hanse lynes that thorugh here shortnes ne coueren not there shameful membres of man / to wikked entent / [423] Allas some of hem shewen the shappe & the boce / of the orrible swollen membres / that semeth I-like to the maladie of hirnya in the wrapping of here hoses / [424] and eke the buttokes of hem that faren / as it were the hinder parte of a she Ape / in the ful of the moone / [425] And more-ouer the wreched swolle membres / that thei shewe thorugh disgisyng / in departynge of here hoses white & rede / semeth that halff here privy membres were flayne / [426]. And if so be that thei departen here hoses in other colours / as is white & black / or white & blewe / or blak & rede / & so forthe / [427] than semeth hit as bi variaunce of coloure / that halff the partie of his priue membres ben corrupte / bi the fire of seint Antonye or bi Cancre / or bi suche other meschaunces / [428] Yit of the hinder parte of here buttokes / it is ful orrible to se / ffor certes in that partie of here bodie / there as thei purgen here stinkynge ordure / [429] that foule parte shewe thei vnto the peple / proudely / in dispite of honeste / whiche honeste Ihesu crist & his frendes obserued to shewe in his liff / [430] Now as to outrageous aray of wommen / god woot though the visages of hem semen ful chaste / & debonayre / yit notefien thei in there araye / in atire of likerousnesse & pride / [431] I seie nat that honeste in clothinge of man / & woman is vncouenable / But certes the superfluyte / or the disordinat scantnesse of clothinge / is reprovable / [432] Also the synne of an ornement / or apparaile / as in thinges that apperteynen to ridynge / as in to many delicate horses that ben hold-

en for delite / that ben so faire fatte / and costelewe / [433] And also many a vicious knave I-mayntened [1]bicause of hem // And in to curious harneyse / as in sadels cropers / peitresles / bridles couered with precious clothinge & riche barres / & plates / of golde & of siluer / [434] ffor whiche god seith bi Zakarie the prophete / I wol confounde the riders of suche horses / [435] This folke taken litel rewarde of the ridynge of god-is sone of heuen / & of his harneys whan he rode vppon the Asse / & had noon othir harneys but the clothes of his pore disciples / Ne we rede nat that euer he rode on other beste / [436] I speke thus of the sinne of superfluite / & nat for the resonable honeste / whan reson it requirith // [437] And forther ouere / certes pride is gretely notefied in holdynge of grete meyne / whan thei ben of litel profite / or right of no profite / [438] & namely whan meyne is vileynous & damageous to the peple / bi hardynesse of high lordshippe or bi wey of office // [439] ffor certes suche lordes sellen than here lordshippes to the deuel of helle / whan thei sustene the wikkednesse of here meyne // [440] Or elles whan these folke of lowe degre / as tho that holden hosteleries / & that is many manere of folke / that susteynen theffte / for here Ostelers / & that is in manere of disseites / [441] thilke manere of folke ben the flyes of felonye that folewen the hony / or elles the houndes that folowen the careyne / suche forseide folke strangelen spiritualy here lordshippes // [442] ffor whiche thus seith Dauid the prophete wikked dethe mote come to thilke lordshippes / & god yeue that thei mowe descende a-doun) in-to helle / ffor in here houses ben iniquitees & shrewdenesse & not god of heuen / [443] And certes but if thei do amendement / right so as god yaff his beneson to kyng Pharao bi the service of Iacob / and to Laban bi the seruise of Ioseph right so god wol yeue his malison to suche lordshippes / as susteyne the wikkednesse / of here seruauntes / but thei

¶ Zakarias.

¶ Dauid

come to amendement // [444] Pride of the table appereth eke ful offte / for certes riche men ben cleped to festes & pore folke ben put aweye / & rebuked [445] also in excesse of diuers metes & drinkes / & namely suche manere of bake [1]metes & dissh metes / brennynge in wilde fire / & peynted & castelled with papire / & in semblable waste / so that hit is abusion for to thenke / [446] & eke in the grete preciousnesse of vessel & curiousite of mynstralcie / bi the whiche a man is stered the more to delites of luxurie / [447] if so be that he sette his herte the lasse on oure lord Ihesu criste / certeyne it is sinne / And certeynely the delites myghten be so grete in this case that men myghte lightly falle bi hem in-to dedly synne // [448] The espices that sourden of pride / sothely whan thei sourden of malice ymagened / avised or a fore caste / or elles of vsage ben dedly synnes it is no doute / [449] And whan thei sourden bi freelte vnavised sodenly / & sodenly withdrawe ageyne / al be thei greuous synnes / I gesse that thei ben nought dedly / [450] Now myghte men axe / wherof that pride sourdeth & springeth / & I seie somtyme hit springeth of the goodis of nature / & somtyme of the goodis of fortune / and somtyme of the goodis of grace / [451] Certes the goodis of nature / stonden in the goodis of bodye / or goodis of soule / [452] Certes the goodis of bodye / ben hele of bodie / strengthe / delyuernesse / beaute / genterie / ffranchises /

¶ Goodis of nature. [453] Goodis of nature of the soule / ben goodis with sharpe vnderstondynge / subtile engyne / vertu naturel / good

¶ Goodis of fortune memorie / [454] Goodis of fortune ben richesse / high degrees of lordshippes / preisinges of the peple // [455]

¶ Goodis of grace. Goodis of grace ben scienses / power to suffre / spirituel travaile / benyngnitees / vertuous contemplacion / with-stonding of temptacion / & semblable thinges / [456] of whiche foreseide goodis / certes hit is a ful grete folie a man to pride him in any of hem alle // [457]

Now as for to speke of godis of nature / god wot that somtyme we haue hem in nature / als meche to oure damage /. as to oure profite [458] And for to speke of hele of bodie /. certes it passeth ful lightly /. & eke hit is ful offte encheson of sikenesse of the soule / ffor god woot the flesshī is a ful grete enemy to the soule / and therfore the more the bodie is hoole / the more ben we in perel to falle / [459] Eke for to pride him / in his strengthe of bodie / hit is an highe folye / ffor certes the flesshe coueiteth ageine the spirit / [1]and ay the more stronge the flesshī is / the soriere may the soule be / [460] And ouer al this / strengthe of bodie / & worldly hardinesse / causith ful offte many a man to perel & meschaunce / [461] Eke for to pride him in his gentrie / is a ful grete folie / ffor often tyme the gentrie of the bodie / bigynneth the gentrie of the soule / and eke we alle ben of on fader & of on moder / & alle we ben of oo nature roten & corrupte / riche & pore / [462] ffor sothe a manere of gentrie it is to preise that apparellith mannes corage / with vertues & moralitees / & makith him cristes childe / [463] ffor trusteth wel that ouer what man / that synne hath maistrie / he is verry chorle to synne /

[464] Now ben ther general thinges of gentillesse / as eschewynge of vices / or rebaudrie / & seruage of synne / In worde / in werke / & contenaunce / [465] & vsyng vertu / curtesie / and clennesse / & to be liberal / that is to seie large bi mesure / ffor that that passith mesure / is folie & synne / [466] Another is to remembre him / of bounte / that he of other folke hath receivede / [467] Another is to be benigne / to his goode subiectes / wherfore as seith Seneca / ther nys nothing more ¶ Seneca. couenable to a man of high estate / than debonarte & pite / [468] And there [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] bees whan thei chese hem a kyng / thei chesen him that hath no prikke to stynge with // [469]

Another is a man to haue a noble herte / & a diligent to atteyne to hiȝe vertues thinges / [470* *see after* 471; *and note the transposing of the clauses in* 472 . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
[471] Certes also who that prideth him / in the goodes of fortune / he is a ful grete foole / ffor somtyme is a man a ful grete lorde bi the morowe / that is a wrecche & a caitiff / or it be niȝt / [*470] Now certes a man to pride him in the goodes of grace / is eke outragious folie / ffor the yifftes of grace / that shold haue turned him to goodnesse / & to medicyne / turneth him to venym & to confusion / as seith seint Gregorie / [472] And somtyme the delites of man ben the cause of his grete maladie of whiche he deyeth / And somtyme the riches of a man is cause of his dethe / [473] Certes the commendacion of the peple is sumtyme ful fals / & ful brotel for to truste also / this daie thei preise to morne thei lakke / [474] God woote desire to [1]haue commendacion eke of the peple hath caused deth to many a besy man / [475] Now sithens that so is that ye haue vnderstonden what is pride / & whiche ben the spices of it / & whence pride sourdeth & springeth

¶ Gregorie.

Remedium contra peccatum superbie.

[476] NOw shal ye vnderstonde / whic[h]e is the remedie ayeines the synne of pride and that is humilite or mekenesse / [477] that is a vertu / thorugh whiche a man hath verry knewleche of him silff / & holdith of him silff / no pris ne deynte / as in regarde of his desertes considring euere his freelte // [478] Now ben ther thre maners of humilite / as humilite in herte / Another humilite is in mouthe / The thride is in werkes / [479] The humilite in herte / is in foure maners / that on is whan a man ne holdith him silff nought worth bifore god of heuen / Another is whan he dispisith

noon other man / [480] The thride is / that he rekketh nat though men holde him nought worthe / The ferthe is whan he is nat sory / of his humyliacion / [481] Also the humilite of mouthe is in foure thinges / In attempre speche / & in humble speche / and whan he biknowith with his owne mouth that he is suche / as him thinketh that he is in his herte / another is whan he preisith the bounte of another man / & no thing therof amennsith [482] humilite / Eke humilite in werkes is in foure maners / the firste is whan he puttetħ other men biforne him / the seconde is / to chese the loweste place ouer al / the thrid is gladly to assente to good counsaile / [483] the fourthe is gladly to stonde to the worde of his soueraignes / or of him that is in highere degre than he / & this is a grete werke of humylite //

De inuidia.

[484] Afftер pride wol I speke of the foule synne of envie / whiche that is / as bi the wordes of the Philosophre sorowe of other mannes prosperite / and after the worde of seint Austyne / hit is sorowe of other mennes ¶ Austyne. wele / & ioye of othe[r] men-is harme / [485] This foule synne is platly ayeine the holy goste / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] yit natheles for-asmeche that bounte apperteyneth properly to the holy gost / And envie cometh properly of malice / therfore it is properly ayeines the bounte of the holy goste // [486] Now hath malice two [1]spices / that is to seie hardnesse / & wikkednesse / or elles the flesshe of a man / that is so blinde that he considreth nought that he is in synne / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] whiche is the hardnesse of the deuel // [487] That other spice of malice is / whan that a man werreieth trouth / whan that he woote that hit is trouth / & eke whan he werreieth the grace that god hath yive / to his

neighbour / and al this is bi envie / [488] Certes than is envie the worste synne that is / ffor sothely alle other synnes ben sumtyme ayeines .o. special vertu / [489] but certes envie is ayeines alle special vertues / & ayeines al goodnesse / for it is sory of al the bountees of his neighbour / And in this manere it is diuerse from al other synnes / [490] ffor wel vnnethe is ther any other synne / that hit ne hath sum delite in him silff / saue only envie / that euer hath in him selff angvisshe & sorowe / [491] The spices of envie ben these / ther is first sorowe / of other mennes / goodnesse / & of here prosperite / whiche is kindely matire of ioye / than is envie a synne ayeins kynde / [492] The secounde spice of envie / is ioye of other men-is harme / & that is properly like to the Deuel / that euer reioyseth him of man-is harme / [493] Of these two spices cometh bagbitynge / [. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] or detraccion hath twey spices / as thus / Somme man preisith his neighbour / bi a wikked entente / [494] for he makith alwey a wikked knotte at the laste ende / alwey he makith a butte at the laste ende / that is digne of more blame than worth is al the preisinge / [495] The secounde spice is / that if a man be good / & doth & seith al thing to good entente / The bagbiter wol turne al the goodnesse vp so doun / to his shrewede entente / [496] The thride is to amennse the bounte of his neighbour / [497] The ferthe spice of bagbityng is this / That if men speke goodnesse of a man / than wol the bakbiter seie perfay / suche a man is better than he / in dispreisinge of him that men preise / [498] The .v. spice is this / for to consente gladly & herken the harme that men speke of other folke / this is ful grete / & ay encreseth after the wikked entente of the bakbiter || [499] Affter bakbityng cometh grucchinge or murmuracion / & somtyme it springeth of inpacience ayeines god / & somtyme ayeines man /

[500] ayeines god it is / whan a man / groccheth ayeines the peyne of helle / or ayeines pouerte / of losse of catel / or ayeines reyne or tempest / or ellis grucchen for shrewen haue prosperite / or good men aduersite / [501] & al these thinges sholde men suffre paciently / for thei comen bi the rightful iugement and ordynaunce of god / [502] Somtyme cometh grocching of avarice as Iudas grucched ayeines the Magdaleyne / whan she anoynted the hede of oure lorde Ihesu criste / with hir precious oynement / [503] This manere murmur is suche / as whan men grocchen of goodnesse / that hem silff don / or that other folke don / of here owne catal / [504] Somtyme cometh murmur of pride / as whan Symon the Phareseie grucched ayeines the Magdaleyne / whan she approchede to Ihesu criste / & wepte at his feete for hir synnes / [505] And somtyme hit sourdeth of envie / whan men discoueren a man-is harme / that was priue / or bereth him on honde thinge that is fals // [506] Murmur is eke offte amonge seruauntes / that grucchen whan here soucreynes bidden hem to don leueful thinges / [507] and for als meche as thei dar nat openly ayeine seie the commaundement of here souereignes / yit wol thei seie harme / & grucche / & murmur priuely for verry dispite / [508] whiche wordes men clepen the Deuels Pater noster / though so be that the deuel had neuere Pater noster / but that folke yeve hit suche aname // [509] Somtyme hit cometh of Ire / or of pride & hate / that norisheth rankour in herte / as afterward I shal declare / [510] Than cometh eke bitternesse of herte / thorugh whiche bitternesse euery good dede of his neighbour / semeth to him bitter & vnsauerie / [511] than cometh discorde / that vnbindeth al manere of frendeshippe / Than cometh scornynge of [. . . . ¶ scornynge.
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] his neighbour / al do he neuere so wel / [512] Than cometh accusynge as whan a man sekith occasion to anoyen his accusynge.

neighbour / whiche that is like the craffte of the deuel / that waiteth both̄ day & night̄ to accusen vs alle // [513] Than cometh malignite / thorugh whiche a man / [1]anoyeth his neighbour priuely if he may / [514] & if he may nat algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante / as for to brenne his hous priuely / or openly / or slen his bestes / and semblable thinges

Remedium contra peccatum Invidie.

[515] NOw wol I speke of the remedie ayeines this foule synne of envie / ffirst is the loue of god principal / And louynge of his neighbour as him silff / ffor that on may nat be withouten that other / [516] And trusteth wel / that in the name of thi neighbour thow shalt vnderstonde the name of thi brother / ffor certes alle we haue but O fader flesshly & O moder / that is to seine Adam & Eve / And eke O fader spirituel that is to seie god of heuen / [517] thi neighbour artow holden to loue & willen al goodnesse / And therfore seith god / loue thi neighbour as thi silff / that is to saluacion bothe of bodie & of soule / [518] And more-ouere thow shalt loue him in worde / & in benigne amonesshing & chastising / & comfort him in his anoyes / & pray for him with al thin herte / [519] and in dede thow shalt loue him in suche wise / that thow shalt do to him in charite / as thow woldist hit were don to the in thin owne persone / [520] And therfore thow ne shalt do to him no damage in wikked worde / ne harme in his bodie / ne in his catel / ne in his soule / bi entisinge of wikked ensample / [521] thow shalt [not] desire his wiff / ne noon of his thinges / vnderstonde eke that in the name of thi neighbour is comprehended his enemy / [522] Certes a man shal loue his enemy for the commaundement of god / & sothly thi frende shalt thow loue in god / [523] I seie thin enemy shalt thow loue for godis sake / bi his commaunde-

ment / ffor if hit were reson that man sholde hate his enemy / ffor sothe god wolde nat receive vs to his loue / that ben his enemyes / [524] ayeines thre manere of wronges that his enemy doth to him / he shal do thre thinges / as thus / [525] ayeines hate & rankour of herte / he shal loue him in herte / ayeine chiding & wikked wordes / he shal praie for his enemy / ayeine the wikked dede of his enemy / he shal don him bounte // [526] ffor criste [1] seith / loue youre enemyes / & praye for hem that speke yow harme / & eke for hem that yow chasen / & pursewen / & doth bounte to hem that yow haten / Lo thus commaundeth vs oure lorde Ihesu criste / to do to oure enemyes / [527] ffor sothe nature driveth vs to loue oure frendes / And perfay oure enemyes han we more nede to loue / than oure frendes / And thei that more nede haue / certes to hem shulde men do more goodnesse / [528] And certes in thilke dede haue we remembraunce of the loue of Ihesu criste / that deyed for his enemyes / [529] And for-asmeche as that loue is the more grevous to performe / so meche is more the grete merite // And therfore the louynge of oure enemyes hath confounded the venym of the Deuel / [530] ffor right as the Deuel is discomfited bi humilite / Right so is he wounded to the dethe / bi the loue of oure enemyes / [531] Certes than is loue the medicyne that chaseth out the venym of envie / from man-is herte / [532] the spices of this pas shulne be more largely declared in here chapetles folowynge /

De Ira.

[533]

Afftter envie wol I declare the synne of Ire / for sothely who that hath envie vppon his neighbour anoon comunely he wol fynde him a matire of wrathe / in worde or in dede / ayeines him to whom he hath envie // [534] And as wel cometh Ire / of pride

as of envie / ffor sothely he that is proude or envious / is lightly wrothe /

¶ Austyne

[535] this synne of Ire after the discrivyng of seint Austyne / Is wikked wil / to ben avengede / bi worde / or bi dede / [536] Ire after the Philosophre / is the feruent blood of a man / I-quiked in his herte / thorugh whiche he wolde harme to him that he hateth / [537] ffor certes the herte of a man / bi enchaufynge & mevynge of his bloode / wexeth so trouble / that he is out of al iugement of reson / [538] But ye shul vnderstonde that Ire is in two maners / that on of hem is goode / that other is wikked / [539] The goode Ire is / bi Ielousie of goodnesse thorugh the whiche a man is wrothe / with wikkednesse / & ayeins wikkednesse / And therfore seith th[e] wise man / that Ire is bett than pleye / [540] this Ire is with debonairte and hit is wrothe / withouten bitternesse / nought wroth [1] ayeines the man / but wrooth with the misdede of the man / as seith the

¶ Dauid. Irascimini & nolite peccare &c

prophete Dauid / Irascimini & nolite peccare / [541] Now vnderstondith that wikked Ire is in two maners / that is to seine / sodeyne Ire / & hastiff Ire withouten avisement / & consentyng of reson / [542] the menyng and the sens / of this is that the reson of a man ne consente nat to that sodeyne Ire / & than is hit venial / [543] Another Ire is ful wikked / that cometh of vilony of herte avised & cast biforne / with wikked wille to do vengeaunce / & therto his reson consentith / & sothely that is dedly synne / [544] This Ire is so displesaunt to god / that hit troublyth his hous / & chasith the holy goste out of mannys soule / & wasteth & distroieth the likenes of god / that is to seie / the vertu that is in man-is soule / [545] & putteth in him the likenes of the Deuel / & bynemeth the man from god that is his rightful lord / [546] This Ire is a ful grete plesaunce to the Deuel / for hit is the deuels furneys / that is enchafed with the fire of helle / [547] ffor certes

right so as the fire is more myghti to distroye erthely thinges / than eny other element / Right so is Ire myghti to distroye alle spirituel thinges / [548] Loke how that fire of smale gledes / that ben almoste dede vnder asshen wolne quiken ayeine / whan thei ben touched with brymston / Right so wol Ire euer more quiken ayeine / whan hit is touched bi the pride that is couered in man-is herte / [549] ffor certes fire ne may not come out of nothinge / but if hit were first in the same thing naturelly / As fire is drawe out of flyntes with steel / [550] And right so as pride is offten tyme mater of Ire / Right so is rancoure / norice & keper of Ire / [551] Ther is a manere tre as seith seint Isodre / that whan men make fire of that tre / & couere the coles of hit with asshen / sothly the fire of hit wol lasten al a yere / or more / [552] And right so farith hit of rancoure / whan he is ones conceived in the hertes of som men / certes hit wol laste perauenture from on Esterday / til another [. . *no gap in MS.*] or more / [553] But certes that man is ful fer from the mercy of god / al thilke while ‖

¶ exemplum.

¶ Isidorus.

[554] In [1]this foreseide deuels fforneys / thei forgen .iij. shrewis Pride that ay blowith & encresith the fire bi chidinges & wikked wordes / [555] Than stondeth Envie & holdeth the hote Iren vppon the herte of man / with a peire of longe tonges of longe rancour / [556] And than stondeth the synne of contumelie or striff / & cheste / & batereth & forgeth bi vileynes reprovynges / [557] Certis this cursed synne anoyeth both the man him-silff / & eke to his neighboure / ffor sothly al-moste al the harme / that any man doth to his neighboure / cometh of wrathe / [558] ffor certis outrageous wratthe doth al / that euer the deuel him commaundith / ffor he ne sparith neither criste / ne his swete moder / [559] And in his outrageous anger & Ire / allas allas / ful many on that tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly /

both̄ of criste / & of alle his halowes / [560] Is nat this a cursed vice / yis *cer*tis allas / hit bynemeth fro*m* man his witt / & his reson / & al his debonayre liff spirituel / that shulde kepe his soule / [561] Cert*es* hit bynemeth̄ eke god-is diwe lordshipp*e* / & that is man-is soule / & the loue of his neighboure / hit strivith̄ eke alday ayeines trouthe / hit reuyeth him the quiete of his herte / & subu*er*tethe his soule /

[562] Off Ire comen these stinkynge engendrures / ffirst hate that is olde wratthe / discorde thorugh which̄ a man forsaketh his olde frende / that he hath̄ louede ful longe // [563] And than cometh̄ werre / & eu*er*y man*er*e of wronge that man doth̄ to his neighb̄oure in body or in cateh̄ [564] Off this cursed synne of Ire cometh̄ eke manslaugh̄ter / And vnderstondeth̄ wel that homycide that is manslaugh̄t*er* / is in diu*er*se wise / Some man*er*e of homicide is spirituel / & some is bodily / [565] Spirituel manslaugh̄ter is in .vj. thinges / ffirst bi
¶ Iohn. hate as seith seint Ioh̄n / that he that hateth̄ his brother is an homicide // [566] homicide is eke bi bakbityng / of
¶ Salomon. whiche bakbiters seith̄ Salomon / that thei haue two swerdis with the whiche thei slen here neigh̄boures / for soth̄ly as wikked it is to byneme him his good name / as his liff / [567] Homicide is eke in yevinge of wikked consail bi fraude / as for to yeve consail to [1]areise wrongfully custumes & tallages / [568] of whiche seith̄
¶ Salomon Salomon / Lyoun rorynge / Bere hungry / ben like to cruel lordshippes / in withholdyng or abreggyng of the sheepe / or of the hyre / or of the wages of *ser*uauntes / or ellis in vsure / or in withdrawynge of almesse / fro the pore folke / [569] for which̄ the wise man seith̄ / ffedith him that almoste deyeth̄ for hungre / for soth̄ly but if thow fede him / thow sleest him / And alle these ben dedly synnes / [570] Bodyly manslaughter is whan thow sleest him with thi tonge / in other man*er*e as whan thow commaundist to sle a man / or ellis yevist him consail to sle a

man / [571] Manslaughter in dede is in .iiij. maners / that on is bi lawe / right as a Iustice dampneth him that is coupable / to the dethe / but lat the Iustice be war that he do hit rightfully / & that he do it nat for delite to spille bloode / but for keping of rightwisnesse / [572] Another homicidē is don for necessite / as whan a man sleeth another in his defendaunt / & that he ne may non otherwise escape from his owne deth / [573] but certis if he may escape withouten deth of his aduersarie / & sleeth him he doth synne / & he shal bere penaunce / as for dedly sinne / [574] Eke if a man bi caas or auenture shete an arowe / or cast a ston / with the whiche he sleeth a man hit is homicide / [575] Eke if a woman bi necligence ouerlithe hir childe in hir slepinge hit is homicide & dedly synne / [576] Eke whan a man distourbeth the conceipcion of a childe / or maketh a woman bareyne bi drinkyng of venemous herbes thorugh whiche she may nat conceive / or sleeth a childe bi drynkes / or ellis putteth certeyne materiał thinges in hir secre place to sle the childe / [577] or ellis doth vnkyndly synne / bi the whiche man or woman shedith there nature in manere or in place / there as a childe ne may nat be conceived / or ellis if a woman haue conceived / and hurteth hir silff & sleeth hir childe / yit is it homicide / [578] what seie we eke of women that mordren there children for drede of worldly shame / certes an horrible homicide / [579] Homicide is eke if a man approcheth to a woman bi desire [1]of lecherie bi the whiche the childe is perisshed / or ellis smyteth a woman wetingly / thorugh whiche she lesith hir childe / alle these ben homicides & horrible dedly synnes / [580] yit cometh ther of Ire many mo synnes / as wel in worde / as in thought / & in dede / as he that arecceth vppon god / or blameth god of thinge / of whiche he is him-silff gilty / or dispisith god & alle his halowes / as don these cursed hasardours /

in diuerse contres / [581] this cursed synne don thei / whan thei felen in here herte ful wikkedly of god & his halowis / [582] Also whan thei treten vnreuerently the sacrament of the auter / Thilke synnes ben so grete / that vnnethes may hit ben relessed but that the mercy of god / passith̄ his workes / hit is so grete / & he so benygne / [583] Than cometh̄ of Ire attrie anger / whan a man is sharply amonesshed in his shriffte to forlete synne / [584] than wol he be angry and answere hokerly / & angerly / or defende & excuse his synne bi vnstedfastnesse of his flesshe / or ellis he dide hit / for to holde companye with his felowes / or ellis he seith̄ the fende entised him / [585] or ellis he dide hit for his youthe / Or ellis his complexion is so coragious / that he may nat forbere / Or ellis hit is his destenye / as he seith vn-to a certeyne age / Or ellis he seith hit cometh him of gentilnes of his auncetres & semblable thinges / [586] Alle these manere of folke so wrappen hem / in here synnes / that thei ne wol nought̄ delyueren hem-silff / ffor sothly no wight̄e that excusith̄ him of his synne wilfully / may not be delyuered of his synne / til that he mekely biknowe his synne / [587] After than cometh sweringe / that is expresse ayeines the commaundement of god / & this bifallith̄ offte of anger & of Ire / [588] God seith thow shalt not take the name of thi lord god in veyne ne in ydel / Also
¶ Mathewe. oure lord ihesu seith̄ bi the wordes of seint Mathewe / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [589] Ne wille ye nought̄ to swere in no manere / neither bi heuen for it is godis trone / Ne bi the erthe for hit is the benche of his feete / Ne bi Ierusalem for it is the Cite of a grete kynge / Ne bi thin hede / for it [1]is nat thin owne / for thow maist nat make an heere white ne blak / [590] but seith bi youre ye / ye & nay / nay / And what that is more it is euel / thus seith̄ criste / [591] ffor cristes sake ne swerith̄ nought̄ so synfully / in dismembringe of criste / bi soule

herte / bones / & body / ffor certes it semeth that ye thenke the cursed Iewes dismembred him nought I-nough / [. . *no gap in the MS.*] but ye dismembren him more / [592] And if so be the lawe compelle yow to swere / than shul ye reule yow after the lawe of god in youre swerynge / As seith seint Ierome in .iiij.the chapitle / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] Thow shalt kepe .iij. condicions / thow shalt swere in trouthe / in dome / & in rightwisnesse / [593] this is to seyne thow shalt swere sooth / for euery lesing is ayeines criste / ffor criste in verray trouthe / And thenke wel this / That euery grete swerer / nat compelled lawfully to swere / the wounde shal nat departe from his hous / whiles he vsith suche vnlawful swerynge / [594] Thou shalt swere eke in dome / whan thow art constreyned bi the Domesman to wittnesse the trouthe / [595] Eke thou shalt nat swere for envie ne for fauour / ne for mede / but for trouthe & rightwisnesse the declaracion of hit to the wourshippe of god / & to helpinge of thin euen cristen / [596] And therfore euery man that taketh the name of god in ydel / or falsly swerith with his mouthe / or ellis taketh on him the name of criste to be called a cristen man / & levith ayeins cristes levynge & his techinge / alle thei taken godis name in ydel / [597] Loke eke what seith seint Peter ¶ Petrus. Actuum .iiijto. Non est aliud nomen sub celo / Ther act .iiijto. nys noon other name seith seint Peter vnder heuen / I-youen to men in whiche thei mowe be saued / that is to seine / but in the name of Ihesu criste / [598] [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] As seith seint Poule / ¶ Paule. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] that in the name of Ihesu euery kne of heuenly creatures / or erthely / or of helle shulle bowe / for hit is so high & so wourshipful / that the cursed fende in helle sholde tremble for to hire hit nempned / [599] Than semeth hit that men that sweren so horribly bi his ¶ Ierome.

blissed name / that thei dispisen it more boldely than diden the cursed Iewes / or ellis the deuel that tremblith whan he hyrith his name /

[600] Now certis sithe that sweringe but if hit be lawfully doñ / is so highly defended / meche [1] wors is forsweryng falsly / And yit nedeles

[601] what seie ye of hem / that deliten hem in swering / & holde hit a gentrie / or a manly dede / to swere grete othes / And what of hem that of verry vsage ne sease nat to swere grete othes / al be the cause nought worthe a strawe / certes this is an horrible synne / [602] swering sodonly withoute avisement is eke a

¶ swerynges, synne / [603] Now lat vs go to thilke horrible & cursed swering / of adiuracion & coniuracion / as doñ these false enchauntours / & nigromansours in basins ful of water / or in a bright swerde / in a cercle / or in a fire / or in a shelderben of a shepe / [604] I can not seyne but that thei don cursedly / & dampnably / ayeines criste / & al the feith of holy chirche /

[605] what seie we of hem that bileven on divynailles / as bi flight or bi noyse of briddes / or of bestes / or bi sorte bi nigromancie / bi dremes / bi chirkyng of doores / bi gnawynge of rattes / or crakyng of housus / & suche manere of wrecchednesse / [606] certis al this thinge is defended bi god & holy chirche / for whiche thei ben acursed til thei come to amendement / that in suche filthe setten here bileve / [607] Charmes for woundes / of maladie of men or of bestes / if thei take any effecte / hit may be perauenture / that god suffrith hit / for folke sholde yeve the more feith & reuerence to his name /

¶ Lesynges. [608] Now wol I speke of lesinges / whiche generally is fals signifiaunce of wordes / in entente to disceiven his euen cristen [609] Some lesinge is of whiche ther cometh noon auantage to no wighte / And some lesinge turneth to the ease and profite of a man / & to

damage of another man / [610] Another lesinge is for to saue his liff / or his catel / Another lesing cometh of delite for to lye / in whiche delite thei wolne forge a longe tale / & peynte hit with al circumstaunces / wher al the grounde of the tale is fals / [611] Some lesinge cometh for he wol sustene his worde / Some lesinge cometh of rechelesnesse withouten avisement / & semblable thinges /

[612] Late vs now touche the vice of flaterynge / ¶ flaterynges. the whiche ne cometh nat gladly / but for drede / or for couetise / [613] fflaterie [1]is generally wrongeful preisynge / fflaterers ben the deuelis nerices / that norisshen his children with mylke of losengerye / [614] ffor soth Salomon seith ¶ Salomon. that flaterie is worse than detraccion / ffor somtyme detraccion maketh an havteyne man / to be the more humble / for he dredith detraccion // But *certes* flaterie makith a man to enhansen his herte & his contenaunce / [615] fflaterers ben the deuelis enchauntours / for thei maken a man to wene of him selff be like / that he is nat like / [616] thei ben like to Iudas that bitrayed [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] a man to selle him to his enemy / that is to the deuel / [617] fflatrers ben the deuels Chapeleynes, that singen euere Placebo / [618] I reken flaterie in the vice of Ire / ffor offt tyme if a man be wroth, with a-nother than wol he flatere som wight to sustene him in his quarel /

[619] Speke we now of suche cursinge as cometh ¶ Cursynge out of Irons herte / Malison may be seide generally / euery maner powere of harme / suche cursing birevith a man fro the regne of god / As seith seint Poule [620] that ¶ Poule. suche cursinge wrongefully / retorneth oftyn tyme ayeine to him that cursith / as a bridde retorneth ayeine to his ow[ne n]este / [621] And ouer al thing men oughte [MS. rubbed.] to eschewe to curse here children / & yeven to the deuel there engendrure / as fer forth as in hem is / certis hit is a grete perille & a grete synne //

¶ Chidynge. [622] Late vs now speke of chidynge & reproche whiche ben grete woundes in man-is herte for thei vn-sewen the seemes of frendeshippe in mennes herte / [623] ffor certis vnnethes may a man ben pleynly accorded with him / that hath him openly reviled / & reproued & disclaundred / this is a ful grysely synne / as criste seith in the gospel / [624] And take kepe now that he that reprovith his neighbour / outher he reprovith him bi some harme of peyne that he hath in his body / As Mesel. Croked harlott / or bi some synne that he dothe // [625] Now if he reprove him bi harme of peyne / than turneth the repreff to Ihesu criste / for peyne is sent bi the rightwis sonde of god / & bi his suffe[1]raunce / be it Meselrie or mayme / or maladie. [626] And if he reprove him vncharitably / of synne / as thow holour thow dronkelewe harlott / & so forth / than apperteyneth that to the reioysing of the deuel / that euer hath ioye that men don synne / [627] And certis chidynge may not come but of a vileyns herte / ffor after the
¶ ex habundancia cordis os loquitur. habundaunce of the herte speketh the mouthe ful offte / [628] And ye shul vnderstonde that loke bi any wey / whan any man shal chastise another / that he be war of chidinge or reproving / ffor truly but he be wer / he may ful lightly queken the fire of anger & of wratthe / whiche that he sholde quenche / and peraventure sleth him that he myghte chastise with benyg-
¶ Salomon. nite / [629] ffor as seith Salomon the amyable tonge / is the tree of liff / that is to seyne of liff espirituel / And a dislave tonge / sleth the spirites of him that reprovith / and eke of him that is reproved / [630] Lo what seint Austyne seith / ther is nothing so like the
¶ Paule. deucles childe as he that offte chideth / seint Poule seith eke / I seruaunt of god bihove nought to chide / [631] And how that chiding is a vileyns thing bitwix al manere folke / zit is hit certis most vncovenable bitwixe a man & his wiff / for there is neuer reste /

And therfore seith Salomon / An hous that is vncouered in rayne & droppinge / & a chidynge wiff ben I-like [632] a man that is in a droppinge hous in many places / though he eschewe the droppinge in o place / yit it droppeth on him in a-nother place / so farith hit bi a chidinge wiff / but she chide him in o place / she wol chide him in another / [633] And therfore better is a morssel of brede with ioye / than an hous ful of delites with chidinge / seith Salomon [634] seint ¶ Salomon Poule seith / O ye women be ye subiectes to youre housbondes / as bihoveth in god / And ye men loveth youre wives / as Colonisences .iij°. ¶ Ad Colonisenses .iij°.

[635] Afterward speke we of scornynge / whiche is a wikked synne / and namely whan he scornyth a man for his goode workes / [636] ffor certes suche scorners faren I-like the foule toode that may nat endure to smelle the swete sauoure of the vyne / whan it flourith / [637] [1]These scorners ben partynge felawes with the deuel / for thei haue ioye whan the deuel wynneth / & sorowe whan he leseth / that is to seye sauacion of soule / [638] thei ben aduersaries to oure lord ihesu criste / for thei haten that he loveth / that is to seie sauacion of soule /

[639] Speke we now of wikked consail / ffor he that wikked consail yeueth is a traytoure / for he disceiveth ¶ wikked consaille. him that trusteth in him / vt Achitofel de Absone / But natheles yit is his wikked counsail first ayens him selff / [640] ffor as seith the wise man Euery fals levyng man hath this properte in him selff / that he that wol anoye another man / he anoyeth first him selff / [641] And men shul vnderstonde / that man shal nat take his counsail of fals folke / ne of to angry folke / ne of grevous folke / ne of folke that louen to meche specially here owne profite / ne to meche wordly folke / & namely in consaillynge of soules /

[642] Now cometh the synne of hem that sowen & maken discorde / amenges folke / whiche is a synne that ¶ Discorde.

criste hateth vtterly / and no wonder is / for he deyed to make concorde / [643] & more shame do thei to criste / than dide thei that him crucified / ffor loueth better that frendeshippe be amonges folke / than he dide his owne body / whiche that he yaff for vnitees / therfore ben thei likened to the Deuel / that euere is a-boughte to make discorde /

¶ Double tonge. [644] Now cometh the synne of double tonge / suche as speken faire bifore folke / & wikkedly be-hynde / or ellis thei maken sembelaunt / as though thei spake of goode entencion / or elles in game & pleye / & yit thei speken of wikked entent /

¶ bi-wreiynge. of consaille. [645] Now cometh biwreiynge of consail / thorugh the whiche a man is defamed / certes vnnethe may he restore the damages /

¶ Manace [646] Now cometh manas that is an opon folye / ffor he that offte manassith / he thretith more than he may do ful offt tyme /

¶ ydel wordes. [647] Now cometh ydel wordes / that is withouten profite / of him that speketh the wordes / & eke of him that herkeneth the wordes / or ellis ydel wordes ben tho that be nedeles / [1]or withouten entente of naturel profite / [648] And al be hit that ydel wordes ben somtyme venial synne / yit sholde men doute hem / for we shul yeue rekenynge of hem / biforne god /

¶ Iangelinge. [649] Now cometh Iangelynge that may nat be withouten synne / as seith Salomon hit is a signe of aperte folye / [650] And therfore a Philosophre seide / whan a man asked him how men sholde please the peple / And he answerde & seide / do many goode workes / & speke fewe Iangelynges /

¶ Iapes. [651] And after this cometh the synne of Iapes that ben the deuels Apes / for thei maken folke to laughe at here iaperye / as folke don at the gaudes of an Ape / suche iapes defendith seint Poule // [652] Loke how that vertuous wordes & holy / conforten hem

that travaile in the seruice of criste / Right so conforten the vileyns wordes & knakkes of iapers hem / that travailen in the seruice of the deuel / [653] these ben the synnes that comen of the tonge / that comen of Ire / And other synnes many mo.

Remedium contra peccatum Ire

[654] THe remedie ayeines Ire / is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude that is debonairte / & eke another vertu that men clepen Pacience / or ellis sufferaunce /

[655] Debonairte withdrawith & refreyneth the sterynges & the mevynges of man-is corage in his herte / in suche manere that thei ne skippe nought out bi anger / ne bi Ire / [656] Suffraunce suffreth swetly alle the anoysaunces / & the wronges / that men don to a man outwarde / [657] seint Ierome seith thus of Debonairte ¶ Ierome that hit doth noon harme to no wighte / ne seith for noon harme that men him don ne seyne / he ne eschaungeth nat ayeines his reson / [658] This vertu cometh somtyme of nature / ffor as seith the Philosophre / a man is a quike thinge bi nature / debonaire & tretable bi goodenesse / But whan debonairte is enformed of grace / it is the more worthe /

[659] Pacience that is another remedie ayenst Ire / hit is a vertu that suffreth swetly euery mannys goodnesse / & is nat worthe for noon harme / that is doñ [1]vnto him / [660] the Philosophre seith that Pacience is that vertu that suffreth debonairly alle the outrages of aduersite and euery wikked worde / [661] this vertu maketh a man I-like to god & maketh him his owne dere childe as seith criste / This vertu disconfiteth thin enemy / And therfore seith the wise man / If thow wolt venquysshe thin Enemy lerne to suffre / [662] And thow shalt vnderstonde / that a man suffreth .iiij. manere

of greuaunces in outwarde thinges / ayeines the whiche .iiij. he mote haue .iiij. manere of paciences /

[663] The first greuaunce is of wikked wordes / thilke greuaunce suffred oure lord ihesu criste / withouten grucchinge ful paciently / whan the Iewes dispised him & reproued him ful offte / [664] suffre thow therfore paciently / ffor the wise man eke seith̄ / If thow strive with a fool / though̄ the fool be wroth̄ or though he laughe algate thow shalt haue no reste // [665] That other grevaunce outwarde is / to haue damage of thi catel / There ayeines suffred criste ful paciently / whan he was dispoyled of al that he hadde in this liff & that nas nought but the clothes / [666] The .iij. greuaunce is to a man to haue harme in his body / that suffred criste ful paciently in al his passion / [667] The ferthe greuaunce is an outragious labour in werkes / wherfore I seie that folke that maken here seruaauntes to travaile to grevously or out of tyme / as on halydayes / sothly thei don grete synne / [668] Here ayeines suffred criste ful paciently & taught vs pacience / whan he bare vppon his blessed shildres the croys vppon the whiche he sholde suffre dispitous deth̄ / [669] Here may men lerne to be paciente / ffor certes nought onely cristen men ben pacient / for the loue of ihesu criste & for guerdon of the blisse of heuen / & of the blisful liff that is perdurable / But certes the olde paynemes that neuere were cristen commenden & vsen the vertu of pacience /

[670] A Philosophre vppon a tyme that wolde haue beten his disciple for his grete trespace / for whiche he was gretly ameved / & brought a yerde to scoure the childe / [671] And whan the childe sawe the yerde / he seide to his maister / [1]what wol ye don / I wol bete the quod the maister for thi correccion / [672] ffor sothe quod the childe ye ough̄te firste correcte youre silff / that haue lost youre pacience for the gilte of a childe / [673] ffor sothe quod the maister al weping thow.

seist sothe / haue thow the yerde my dere sone & correcte me for myn impacience / [674] Off pacience cometh obedience thorugh the whiche a man is obedient to criste / & to alle hem to whiche he oughte to be obediente in criste / [675] And vnderstonde wel that obedience is perfite / whan men doon gladly and hastyly with good herte entirely al that he shulde don / [676] Obedience generally is to performe the doctryne of god / & of his souerayngnes to whiche him oughte to be obeissaunt to al manere of rightwisnesse /

De accidia.

[677] Afftер the synnes of Envie & Ire / now wol I speke of the synne of accidie / for envie blyndeth the herte of a man / And Ire troubleth a man / And accide maketh him hevie / thoughtful / & wrawe / [678] Envie & Ire maken bitternesse in herte / whiche bitternesse is moder of accidie / & bynemeth him the loue of al goodnesse / than is accidie the anguysshe of a troubled herte / And seint Austyne seith / ¶ Austyne. It is anoye of goodnesse / & anoye of harme / [679] certis this is a dampnable synne / for it doth wronge to Ihesu criste / in-asmeche as hit bynemeth the seruice that men don to criste with al diligence / as seith Salomon / ¶ Salomon. [680] But accide doth no suche diligence / he doth al thing with anoy / & wrawnesse / slaknesse & excusacion / & with ydulnesse & vnlust / ffor whiche the booke seith / Acursed be he that doth the seruice of god necligently / [681] than is accidie Enemy to euery estate of man / ffor certis thestate of man is in .iij. maners / [682] The first estate is the estate of Innocencie as was thestate of Adam bifore or he fel in-to synne / in whiche estate he was holden to werche / as in heriyng & honouryng of god / [683] Another estate is the estate of synful men / in whiche estate men ben holden

to laboure / in praiyng to god for amendement of here synnes / & that he wol graunte hem to arise out of here [1]synnes / [684] Another estate is thestate of grace / in whiche estate he is holde to do workes of penaunce / & certis to alle these thinges is accidie enemy & contrarie / for he loueth no besynesse at al / [685] Now certis this foule synne accidie is eke a ful grete enemy to the liflode of the body / for it hath no purviaunce ayeines temporel necessite / for hit is for slouthed / for slougged & distroyed alle goodes temporelles bi rechelesnesse /

[686] The fourthe thing is / that accide is like hem that ben in the peyne of helle / bicause of here slouthe / & of here hevynesse / ffor thei that ben dampned ben so bounde / that thei ne mow nat wel do / ne wol thenke / [687] Off accide cometh first / that a man is anoyed / & encombred to do any goodnesse / & maketh that god hath abhomynacion of suche accide as seith seint Iohn /

¶ Slouthe. [688] Now cometh slouth that wol nat suffre noon hardenesse / ne no penaunce / ffor soth slouth is so tender & so delicate / as seith Salomon that he wol suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce / And therfore he shendith al that he doth [689] ayeines his roten herted synne of accide / And slouth sholde men excersise & vse hem selff to don good workes & manly / & vertuously cacchen corage wel to don / thenkyng that oure lord ihesu criste quiteth euery goode dede / be it neuere so lite / [690] vsage of labour is a

¶ Bernard grete thing / ffor hit maketh as seith seint Bernarde / the laborer te haue stronge armes / & harde senowes / & slouth maketh a man feble & tendre / [691] Than cometh drede to bigynne any goode workes / ffor certes he that is enclyned to synne him thenketh it is so grete an emprise / for to vndertake to do workes of goodnesse / [692] and casteth in his herte that the

circunstaunces of goodnesse ben so grevous & so chargeable for to suffre / that he dar nat vndertake to don workes of goodnesse / as seith seint Gregorie /

[693] Now cometh wanhope / that is dispeire of the mercy of god / that cometh somtyme of to meche outragious sorow / And somtyme of to meche drede / ymagenynge [1] that he hath don so meche synne / that hit wold nat availe him / though he wolde repent him / & for sake synne & do good / [694] thorugh whiche dispeire or drede / he habundith his herte to euery manere synne / as seith seint Austyne / [695] whiche dampnable synne if it contenue vn-to his ende / hit is cleped synnynge in the holy gost / [696] this orrible synne is so perilous / that he that is dispeired ther is no felonye ne no synne that he douteth for to do / as shewed wel bi Iudas / [697] Certes abouen alle synnes / than is this synne most displesaunce to crist / & most aduersarie [698] to god / sothly he that dispeirith him / is like the cowarde Champion recreant / & seith creant withouten nede / Allas allas nedeles is he recreant / & nedeles dispeired / [699] ffor certes the mercy of god is euere redy to the penitente / & is above alle his workes / [700] Allas can nat a man bi-thinke him on the gospel of seint Luke. xv^mo^. where as criste seith / That as wel shal ther be Ioye in heuen vppon a sinful man / that doth penaunce / than vppon nynety & nyne that [. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] nedith no penaunce / [701] loke ferthermore in the gospel / the Ioye & the feste of the goodman that had lost his sone / whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to his fader / [702] Can thei nought remembre hem that as seith seint luke. xiij°. Capitulo / how that the theff seide that was honged bi-side ihesu cristes side / lord remembre on me whan thow comest vn-to thi kingdome / [703] ffor sothe seide criste / to day thow shalt be with me in Paradise [704] Certes ther is noon so orrible synne of

¶ Wanhope.

¶ luce .xv^mo^.

¶ luce .xiij°. c°.

man / that it ne may in his liff be distroyed bi penaunce / thorugh vertu of the passion & the dethe of criste / [705] Allas what nedith a man than to be dispeired / sithen that his mercy so redy is / & so large / Aske & haue /

¶ sompnolencia [706] Than cometh sompnolence that is sloggy slombrynge / whiche maketh a man hevy & dul in body / & in soule / & this synne cometh of slouthe / [707] And certes the tyme that [1]bi wey of reson men sholde nought slepe bi the morowe but if ther were cause resonable / [708] ffor sothely on the morowe tide is most couenable a man to seie his prayeres / & for to thenke on god / & for to honoure god / & to yeve almes to the pore that first comen in the name of criste / [709] Lo whath seith Salomon who so wol bi the morowe awake & seke me / he shal fynde me / [710] Than cometh necligence or rechelesnesse / that recketh of nothinge / And how that ignoraunce is the moder of al thing / that toucheth harme / Certes necligence is the norice / [711] necligence doth no force whan he shal do a thinge / whether he do it wel or badly /

¶ necligence

[712] Off remedy of these two synnes / as seith the wise man / That he that dredith god / spareth not to don / that him oughte to doñ / [713] & he that loueth god / he wol do diligence to please god / bi his workes / and habunden him selff with al his myghte wel for to doñ /

¶ ydelnesse. [714] Than cometh ydelnesse / that is the yate of al harme / An ydel man is like to a place that hath no walles / there As deuels may entren bi euery side / or shete at him at discouert bi temptacion on euery side / [715] this ydelnes is the Thorroke of alle wikked & viteynes thoughtes / & of alle Ianglis / triflis / & of al ordure / [716] Certes the heuen is yeven to hem that

¶ Dauid wol laboure & nought to ydel folke / Eke Dauid seith / thei ne be nat in the laboure of men / ne thei ne shal nat be whippede with men / that is to seie in purgarie /

[717] Certes than semeth hit that thei shul be turmented / with the deuel in helle / but if thei don penitence /

[718] Than cometh the synne that men clepen tarditas / as whan a man is to latrede or to tariyng / or he wol turne to god / & certis that is a grete folye / he is like him that fallith in the diche & wol nought arise / [719] as this vice cometh of fals hope that he thenketh that he shal leve longe / bu[t] that hope failith ful offte /

¶ tarditas

[720] Than cometh laches that is he / that whan he bigynneth any goode werke / a-non he wol forlete it & stynte / as don thei that haue any wight [1]to gouerne / & ne taken of him no more kepe / anoon as thei fynde any contrarie or any anoye / [721] these ben the newe shepperdes that laten here shepe renne weti[n]gly to the wolff that is in the breres / or don no force of here owne gouernaunce / [722] Of this cometh powerte / and distruccion bothe of spirituel & of temporel thinges / Than cometh a manere of coldnesse / that fresith at the herte of man / [723] Than cometh vndevocion / thorugh the whiche a man is blente / as seith seint Bernarde and suche langour in soule / that he ne may neither rede ne synge / in holy chirche / ne hire ne thenke of no deuocion / ne travaile with his hondes in no goode workes / that hit nys to him vnsaverie / & al appalled / [724] than wexeth he sore & slowe & slombri & soone wol be wrothe / & soone is he enclyned to hate & to envie [725] Than cometh the synne of wordly sorowe / whiche that is cleped tristicia / that sleth a man as seint Poule / [726] ffor certis suche sorowe wercheth to the dethe of the soule & of the bodie also / ffurther ouere than cometh that a man is anoyed of his owne liff / [727] wherfore suche sorowe shorteth ful offte the liff of men / or that here tyme come bi wey of kynde /

¶ Laches.

¶ coldenesse.

¶ vndevocion.

¶ Bernard.

¶ Sorow.

¶ Poule

Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

[728] Ageyns this orrible synne of accidie / & the branches of the same / ther is a vertu that is cleped
¶ ffortitudo. ffortitudo / or strengthe / that is an affeccion thorugh whiche / a man dispisith al maner of noyous thinges / [729] this vertu is so myghti & so vigorous / that hit dar withstonde myghtily & wisely kepe him selff from perellis that ben wikked / and wrestle ayeines the assavte of the deuel / [730] ffor hit enhaunseth & enforseth the soule / right as
¶ ffortitudo. accidie abateth hit / & makith hit feble / for this ffortitudo may endure bi longe suffraunce / the travailes that ben couenable /

[731] this vertu hath many spices [. . *no gap in MS.*] The first is cleped / Magnanymyte / that is to seie [1]grete corage / ffor certis ther bihoueth grete corage ayeines accidie / lest that hit swolowe the soule / bi the synne of sorowe / or distroye hit bi wanhope / [732] this vertu maketh folke to vndertake harde thinges / & grevous bi here owne wille / wisely & resonably / [733] And forasmeche as the deuel fiteth ayeines man / more bi queyntise & bi slighte / than bi strengthe / therfor a man sholde with-stonde him / bi witt / & bi reson & with dis-
¶ fides spes. cression / [734] Than ben ther the vertues of feith / & hope in god / & in his seintes / to atcheuen & accomplisshe goode werkes / in the whiche he purposeth fermely
¶ Securitas to contenue / [735] Than cometh surete or sekernesse / & that is / whan a man ne douteth nat to travaile in tyme comyng to performe the grete workes of goodnesse / that he
¶ Magnificencia hath bigonne / [736] Than cometh magnificence / that is to seie / whan a man doth & performeth grete werkes / & that is the ende / whi that men sholde do goode werkes / for in the accomplisshing of grete & goode werkes lithe the grete guerdoun / [737] Than is ther
¶ Constancia. Constaunce / that is stablenesse / of corage / & this sholde be in herte / bi stedefast feith / & in

the moovthe / & in berynge / in chere / & in dede / [738] Eke ther ben mo special thinges / & remedies / ageyns accidie in diuerse werkes / & in consideracion of peynes of helle / & of the ioyes of heuen / & in the truste of the grace of the holy goste / that wol yeve him mygħt to performe his goode entente /

De Auaricia.

[739]

Affter accidie wol I speke of avarice / & of couetise / of the whiche synne / as seith seint Poule / that the rote of alle synnes is couetise / Ad Tymotheum .vj.to [740] ffor sothely whan the herte of a man is confounded in hit selff / & troubled / and that the soule hath loste the comforte of god / than seketh he an ydel solace of wordly thinges /

[741] Avarice after the discripcion of seint Augustyne / ¶ Austyne. Is a likerousnesse in herte to haue erthely thinges / [742] Somme other folke seie / [1]that auarice is / for to purchase many erthely thinges / & nothing yeve to hem that haue nede / [743] And vnderstondith wel that auarice nys nat onely in londe ne in catel / but somtyme in science / and in glorie / & in euery manere of outragious thinges / is auarice & couetise / [744] And the difference bitwixe auarice & couetise is this / Couetise is for to coueite suche thinges as thow hast nought / And auarice is to withholde & kepe / suche thinges as thow hast withouten rightful nede / [745] sothely this auarice is a synne that is ful dampnable / ffor al holy writt curseth hit / & speketh ayeines that vice / ffor it dothe wronge to Ihesu criste / [746] for it bireueth him the loue that men to him owen / and turneth hit bakwarde ayeines al reson / [747] & maketh that the auericious man / hath more hope in his catel than in Ihesu criste / & doth more obseruaunce in keping of his tresour / than he doth to the seruice of ihesu criste [748] And therfore seith

¶ Poule seint Paule / Ad Ephecios / v.to that an auarious man is thral to ydolatrie /

[749] what difference is bitwixe an ydolastre / & an auarous man / But that an ydolastre *per*auenture ne hath but oon mavmet or two / And the auarous man hath̄ many / ffor *cer*tis eu*ery* floreyne or noble in his cofre is his Mavmet / [750] And certis the synne of Mavmetrie is the first thing / that god defendith̄ in the ten commaund-
¶ Exodi c°. ementes / as berith witnesse in Exodi c° (*blank*) [751] thow shalt haue nō fals godis / bifore me / ne thow shalt make to the no grave thinge / thus is than an auarous man that loueth̄ his tresour' biforne god / An ydolastre [752] thorugh his synne of avarice / & of couetise / comen these harde lord-shippes / thorugh̄ whiche men ben distroyed / bi tallages Custumes & cariages / more than here duete or reson is / and eke take thei / of here bondemen am*er*sementes / whiche myghte more resonably be [1]cleped extorcions than m*er*cymentes / [753] of whic[h]e m*er*cimentes & raunsons of bondemen / some lordis Stewardes seyne that hit is rightful / for-asmeche as a Cherle hath no temporel thing / that hit ne is here lordes as thei seie / [754] But *cer*tis thes lordes don wronge / that thei bireve here bonde folke thinges / that thei
¶ Austyne neu*er* gaff hem / Augusti[n]*us* de Ciuitate dei libro nono / [755] sothe is that the condicion of thraldom / & the first
¶ Genes*is* qui*nto* cause of thraldom is for synne / Genes*is* quinto /

[756] thus may ye se that the gilte deservith thraldom / but nat nature / [757] wherfore these lordes ne shulde nat meche glorifie hem in here lord-shippes / sithen that bi naturel condicion thei ben lordis ou*er* thrallis / but for that / that thraldom cam first bi deserte of synne / [758] And ferther ou*er* there as the lawe seith̄ / that temporal goodes of bonde folke / ben the goodes of here lordshippes / ye that is to vnderstonde / the goodes of the Emp*er*our' to defenden hem in here right̄ / but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem / [759] And therfor'

seith Seneca / Thi prudence sholde leve benygnely with thi thrallis / [760] thei that thow clepest thi thrallis / ben godis peple / ffor humble folke ben cristes frendes / thei ben contubernyal with the lorde / ¶ Seneca.

[761] Thenke eke that of suche seede as Cherles springen / of suche seede springen lordes / as wel may the Cherle be saued / as the lorde / [762] The same dethe that taketh the Cherle / the same dethe takith the lorde / wherfore I rede do right so with thi cherle / as thow woldest thi lord dide with the / if thow were in his plighte / [763] Euery sinful man is a cherle to synne / I rede the lorde thow werche in suche wise / that thi cherles rather loue the than drede the / [764] I wot wel ther is degre / aboue degre / as reson is / & skele that if that men don here devoyre there as hit is due // But certes extorcions & dispites of youre vnderlynges is dampnable / ¶ Consilium.

[765] and therfore vnder-stondith wel / that conquerou[r]s or tirauntes maken ful offt thralles of hem that ben borne / of as roial blood / as ben thei that hem conqueren / [766] This name of thraldom was neuere erst couthe / til that Noye seide / that his sone Cayme shulde be thral to his brother for his synne / [767] what seie we than of hem that pelyn & don extorcions to holy chirche / Certes the swerde that men yeven first to a knyght whan he is newe dubbed / signefieth that he sholde defende holy chirche / & nought robbe it / & who so doth is traitour to criste / [768] as seith seint Austyne / thei ben deuels wolvis that strangelyn the shepe of ihesu criste / & don worse than wolves / [769] ffor sothly whan the wolff hath ful his wombe / he stinteth to strangelyn shepe / but sothely the pilours & the distroyours of holy chirche goodes ne don nat so / for thei ne stinte neuer to pilen / [770] Now as I haue seide / sithen so is that sinne was first cause of thraldom / than is it ¶ Cayme cause of thraldom. ¶ Austyne.

thus / that thilke tyme that al the world was in synne / than was al the worlde in thraldom & subiecciou / [771] But certis sithen the tyme of grace cam / god ordeyned / that some folke shold be more high in estate & degre / than some / and some folke more lowe / And that euerychе sholde be serued in his estate / & in his degre / [772] And therfore in some contrees there they ben thrallis / whan thei haue turned hem to the feith / thei maken here thralles free / out of thraldom / And therfore certis the lord owith to his man / that the man owith to his lorde / [773] The Pope clepeth him silff seruaunt of the seruauntes of god / But for-asmeche as the estate of holy chirche / ne myghte nat haue be kept / ne the comen profite ne myght nat haue be kept ne pees ne reste / in erthe / but if god had ordeyned that some men hadde higher degre / & some men lower / [774] And therfore was souereynte ordeyned / to kepe and mayntene / & defende here vnderlinges / & here subiectes in reson / as ferforthe as it lith in here powere / and nat to distroye hem / ne confounde / [775] wherfore I seie / that suche lordes as ben like wolves / that devouren the possessions or the catel of pore folke wrongefully withouten mercy or mesure / [776] thei shullen resceiven bi the same mesure / that thei haue mesured to pore folke / the mercy of Ihesu criste / but if hit be amended / [777] Now cometh disceite bitu[i]xe marchaunt & marchaunt / And thow shalt vnderstonde that marchaundise is in many maners / that oon is bodily & that other is gostly / that oon is leful & honest / that othere is dishoneste & vuleful / [778] Of thilke bodyly marchaundise that is leful & honest is this / that there as god hath ordeyned / that a Regne or a contre is sufficiaunt to him silff / than it is honest & leful / that of the abundaunce of this contre / that men helpe another contre that is more nedye / [779] And therfore ther mote be marchauntes to bringe from that oon contre / to that othere / here march-

¶ seruus seruorum

¶ Disceite.

aundise / [780] That other marchaundise is that / that men haunte with fraude / & trecherie / & disceite / with lesinges / & fals othes / is cursed & dampnable / [781] Espirituel marchaundise is properly Symonye / that is ententiff desire to bye thinge espirituel / that is thinge that apperteyneth to the seintuarie of god / & to the cure of soule / [782] This desire if it so be / that a man do his diligence to performe hit / al be it though his desire ne take noon effecte / yit is it to him a dedly synne / & if be ordrede he is irregulere / [783] Certis Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus / that wolde haue ¶ Symon Magus boughte with the temporal catel / the yifft that god hadde yeuen bi the holy gost / to seint Peter / & to thappostles / [784] And therfore vnderstondith / that both̄ he that sellith̄ & he that bieth̄ thinges espirituels ben cleped symonyals / be hit bi catel be hit bi procuryng / or bi flesshly praiere / of his frendes / or of his spirituel frendes / [785] [1]flesshely frendes / in two maners / as bi kynrede / or as bi other frendes / or of spirituel frendes / Sothely if thei praie for him that is nat able / & worthi it is symonye / iff he take that benefice / & if he be worthi & able hit nys noon / [786] The other manere is whan a man or a woman praie for folke to avaunce hem / onely for wikked flesshely affeccion / that thei haue vn-to the persones / & that is in soule Symonye / [787] but *certes* in seruices for whiche men yeven thinges espirituels vn-to here seruauntes / hit mot ben vnderstonde / that the seruice mot be honeste / & elles nat / And eke that hit be withouten barganynge / & that the persone be able / [788] ffor as seith̄ seint Damasie / Alle the synnes of the ¶ Damasie worlde / at the regarde of this sinne / ben as thinge of nought / ffor it is the grettest sinne that may be / after the sinne of Lucifer & of Antecriste / [789] ffor bi this sinne god forlesith̄ the chirche & the soule / that he boughte with his precious bloode / bi hem that yeuen chirches to hem that ben nat digne / [790] ffor thei putten in theves that

stelen the soule of Ihesu criste / & distroyen his patrymoigne / [791] By suche vndigne prestes / & curates haue men the lasse reuerence of the sacramentes of holy chirche / And suche yeuers of chirches putten out the childerne of criste / & putten in-to the chirche the deuels owne sones / [792] thei sellen the soules / the lombes thei kepen to the wolff that strangelith hem / and therfore shul thei neuer haue parte of the pasture of the lombes / that is in the blisse of heuen / [793] Now cometh hasardrie / with his appurtenaunce / as tables / Ravfles / of whiche comen disceite / & flas othes / Chidinges / & al ravynges / blasphemynge / & reuyynge of god / & hate of his neighbours / wastynge of goodes / misspendynge of tyme / & somtyme manslaughter / [794] Certis hasardours ne mowe nought be withouten grete synne / whiles thei haunten that craffte / [795] Off Avarice cometh eke lesinges / thefft / fals witnesse [1]ffals othes / and ye shul vnderstonde / that these ben grete synnes / & expresse ayeines the commaundementes of god as I haue seide / [796] ffals witnesse is in worde & in dede eke / In worde / as for to bireve thi neighbouris good name / bi thi fals wittnesse / or bireve him his catel / or his heritage bi thi fals wittnessinge / whan thow for Ire / or for mede / or for envie / berest fals witnesse / or accusest him / or excusest him bi thi fals wittnesse / or ellis excusest thi selff falsly // [797] War yow questemongeres & notories / Certis for fals wittnessinge was Susanna in grete sorowe & peyne & many another mo / [798] The sinne of thefft is eke expresse ayeines godis heeste / & that in two maners / Corporel & spirituel / [799] [Corporel] as for to take thi neighboris catel / ayeines his wil / be hit bi force / or bi slighte / be it bi mette or bi mesure / [800] bi stelinge eke of fals enditementes vppon him / And in borowynge of thi neighboris catel / in that entente neuere to pay / & semblable thinges / [801] Espirituel thefft is sacrilege / that is to seie in hurt-

¶ hasardrie.

¶ war yow questemongeres.

ynge of holy thinges / or of thinges sacrede to criste / in two maners / bi reson / of the holy place / as chirches or chirchehawes / [802] ffor euery violente sinne that men don in suche places may be cleped sacrilege / or euery violence in semblable place / Also thei that withdrawen falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche / [803] And playnly & generally is sacrilege to yeve holy thinge / fro holy place / and vn holy thinge out of holy place / Or holy thinge out of vnholy place /

Remedium contra Auariciam.

[804]

NOw shul ye vnderstonde / that the relevynge of Auarice is mesericorde / & pite largely taken / And men myght axe whi / that misericorde & pite / is the releuynge of Auarice / [805] Certes the auarouse man / shewith no misericorde ne pite / to the nedeful man / ffor he deliteth him in the kepinge of his tresoure / & not in the restoringe ne relevinge of his euen cristen / & therfore speke I first of misericorde [806] [1]Than is misericorde as seith the Philosophre a vertu bi whiche the corage of a man is stered / bi the mysese of him that is mysesed / [807] vppon the whiche misericorde folwith pite / in performynge of charitable workes / of misericorde / [808] And certes this mevith man to misericorde of Ihesu criste / that yaff him silff for oure gult / & suffred dethe / for misericorde / & foreyaff vs oure original sinnes / [809] & therbi relesed vs fro the peyne of helle / & amennshed the peyne of purgatorie bi penaunce / And yevith grace wel to do / And at the laste the ioye of heuen / [810] the spices of misericorde ben as for to leue / & for to yeve / & eke for to foryeve / & relese & haue pite / in herte / & to haue compassion of the mischeff of thi

euencristen / & eke chastice there as nede is / [811] Another man*e*re remedie ayeins auarice is resonable largesse / but sothely here bihovith the consideracion of the grace of Ih*es*u criste / & of his temporel goodes / & eke of the goodes p*er*durable that criste yaff vs / [812] & eke to haue remembraunce of the dethe that he shal resceive he note whanne / & eke that he shal forgon al that he hath / saue only that / he hath dispendid in goode workes /

[813] But for-asmeche as so*mm*e folke ben vnmesurable / men oughten eschue foole largesse that men clepen waste / [814] Certis he that is foole large ne yevith nought his catel / but he leseth his catel / Cert*es* what thinge that he yevith for vayn̄glorie / as to mynstralles / & to folke for to bere his renoun in the worlde he hath don synne & noon almes / [815] Certis he leseth foule his goode / that ne seketh nothinge with his goode but synne / [816] he is like an hors that seketh rather to drynke droupy water or troubly / than for to drinke water of the clere welle / [817] And for-asmeche as thei yeuen there as they shulde nat yeuen / to hem apperteyneth that malison that crist shal yeue at the day of dome to he*m* that shulle be dampnede

De gula.

[818] Afftер auarice cometh glotenye / whiche is expresse eke ayeines the co*mm*aundementes of [1]god / glotenye is vnmesurable appetite to ete / or to drinke / or ellis to don I-nough̃e / to the vnmesurable[2] & discorde covetise to ete & to drinke / [819] This sinne corru*mp*peth al this worlde / as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam & of Eue / Lo eke what seith seint Paule / of gloteneye / [820] Many folke of whiche

[2 appetite *erased*]

¶ Paule

I haue oft seide to yow / & now I seie it wepinge / to hem that ben enemyes of the croyce of criste / of whiche the ende is dethe / and of whiche here wombe is here god / & here glorie in confusion of hem that sc devouren erthely thinges / [821] he that is vsante to this synne of glotenye / he ne may no synne with-stande / he moste be in the seruage of alle synnes or vicis / for it is the deuels horde there he hideth him inne & resteth̄ / [822] this synne hath̄ many spices / The first is dronkenesse / that is the sepulture of manis reson / & therfore whan a man is dronke he hath loste his reson / & this is dedly synne / [823] but certis whan a man is nought wonte to stronge drinke / ne peraueunture ne knowith̄ nat the strengthe of the drinke / or hath̄ feblenesse in his hede / or he hath̄ travailled thorugh whiche he drynketh the more / al be he so sodenly caughte with drynke / it is no dedly synne but venial / [824] The seconde spice of gloteneye is / whan the spirite of man waxeth al trouble for dronkenesse / & birevith̄ him the discresion of his witt / [825] The thride spice of glotenye is whan a man devoureth his meete / & hath no rightful manere of etynge / [826] The ferthe is whan thorugh the grete abundaunce of his meete / the humores of his body ben distemperede / [827] The .v. is foryetefulnesse / bi to mechel drynkynge / for whiche somtyme a man for-yetith̄ bi the morowe / what he dide at eve or on the night biforne /

[828] In other manere ben discrived the spices of glotenye / affter seynt Gregorie / The first is for to ete bi fore tyme / The .ij.de is whan a man geteth him to delicate meete / [829] The .iij.de is whan a man taketh to mechel ouere mesure / The .iiij. [1]is the curiouste / with̄ grete entente to make & appraille his meete / The .v. is to ete to gredily / [830] These ben the .v. fyngeris of the Deuels honde / bi the whiche he drawith̄ folke to synne / ¶ Gregorie.

Remedium contra gulam.

[831]

¶ Galienus

Ageynes glotenye is remedie / the abstinence of his body / as seith Galienus / but that holde I nat meritorie / if he do hit onely for helthe of the bodie / seint Austyne wolde that abstynence were doñ for vertu / & with pacience / [832] Abstinence he seith is litil worthe / but if a man haue goode wille therto / And but if he be enforced bi pacience and bi charite / & that men do it for godis sake / & in hope to haue the blisse of heuen /

[833] The felowes of abstinence ben Attemperaunce / that holdith the meene in al thinges Eke shame that eschewith al dishoneste / Suffisaunce that seketh no riche metes / ne drinkes / ne doth no fors of noon outrageous apparaillynge of meete / [834] Mesure also that restreyneth bi reson the dislave appetite of etinge / Sobernesse also that restreyneth the outrageousnesse of drinke / [835] Sparynge also that restreyneth the delicate ease to sitte longe at his meete / & sofftly / wherfore somme men stonden of here owne wil / to eten here meete at the lasse leyser /

De luxuria.

[836]

Afftер glotenye / than cometh lecherie / ffor these two sinnes ben so nygh cosyns / that often tyme / thei wil nat departen / [837] god woot this sinne is ful displesaunt to god / for he seide him selff / do no lecherie / And there he putte grete peynes ayeines this sinne in the olde lawe / [838] yff a woman thral were taken in this sinne // she sholde be beten with stanes to the dethe / And if she were a gentilwoman she sholde be sleyne with stones / And if she were a busshopes doughter / she sholde be brente / bi godis commaundement / [839] fforther-ouere / for the synne of lecherie god dreynte al the worlde at

dilivio / And after that he brente .v. Citees / with thonder lighte / and [1]sanke hem in-to helle /

[840] Now lete vs speke than / of thilke foule stinkyng synne of lecherie / that men clepen advoutrie / of wedded folke / that is to seie if that oon of hem be wedded or ellis bothe / [841] seint Iohn seith that advoutrers ¶ seint Iohan. shulle ben in helle / in a stynkynge brennynge fire of brymston / for here lecherie / In bremston for the stinkynge of there ordure / [842] Certes the brekynge of this sacrament is an horrible thinge / hit was made of god him selff in paradise / & confermed bi Ihesu criste / as seith seint Mathew in the gospell / A man shal lete ¶ Mathewe. fader & moder / & take him to his wiff / & thei shul be two in oo flesshe / [843] this sacrament bitokeneth the knyttynge to geder of criste / and of holy chirche / [844] And nat onely that god forbade advoutrie in dede / but eke he commaunded that thow shuldist nat coveite thi neighbors wiff. / [845] in this heeste seith seint Austyne is forboden al manere of couetise to do lecherie / Lo what seith seint Mathew quinto *capitulo* / in the ¶ Mathewe. gospell / That who so seeth a woman to couetise of his luste / he hath don lecherie with hir / in his herte / [846] here may ye sen / that nat onely the dede of this synne / is forboden / but eke the desire to don that synne / [847] This cursed synne annoyeth greuously hem that hit haunteth / & first to here soules / ffor he obligeth hit to synne & to the peyne of deth / that is perdurable / [848] vn-to the body annoyeth it greuously also / for hit drieth him / & wasteth him / & shendeth him / & of his blode he maketh sacrifice to the fende of helle / hit wasteth eke his catel / & his substaunce / [849] And certis if it be a foule thinge / a man to wasten his catel on a woman / yit is it a fouler thinge / whan that for suche ordure / wemmen dispenden vppon men here catel & here substaunce / [850] this sinne as seith the prophete birevith man & woman here gode fame / & al here honour / And it is ful plesaunt to the deuel / for therby

wynneth he the most *par*tie of [1]this worlde / [851] And right as a Marchaunt deliteth hi*m* moste in chaffare that he hath most auantage of / Right so deliteth the fende in this ordure /

[852] this is that other honde of the Deuel / with .v. fyngeres to that kaccheth the peple to his vilonye / [853] The first fynger is the fool lokyng of the fool man / & of the fool woman / that sleth / Right as the Basilicok sleth folke bi the venym of his sight / for the couetise of the eyghen folwith the couetise of the herte / [854] The .ij^de^. fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikked manere / and therfore seith Salomon / that who so toucheth & handelith a woman / he farith I-like him that handelith the Scorpion that stingeth & sodenly sleth / thorugh his envenymynge / And who so toucheth warme picche / hit fouleth his fyngers / [855] The .iij. fynger is foule wordes that farith like fire that anoon brenneth the herte / [856] The iiij. fynger is the kissinge / & trewely he were a grete foole that wolde kisse the mouthe of a brennynge Oven / or of a forneys / [857] & more fooles ben thei that kissen in vilanye / for that mouth is the mouthe of helle / & namely these olde dotardes houlours / yit wol thei kisse / though thei may nat do & smater hem / [858] Certis thei ben I-like houndes / ffor an hounde whan he cometh bi the rosiere / or bi other beautees / though he may nought pisse / yit wol he lifft vp his legge / & make a contenaunce to pisse / [859] And for that many men wene that thei may nat synne / for no licorousnesse that he dothe with his wiff / Certis that oppinion is fals / god wote a man may sle him selff with his owne knyff / & maken him dronken with his owne tonne / [860] Certes be it wiff / be it childe / or any other erthely thinge / that he loueth bifore god / hit is his mavmet / & he is an ydolastre / [861] A man sholde loue his wiff bi discresion paciently & attemporally / & than is she [2]as it

¶ Salomon.

were his suster / [862] The .v. fynger of the deuels honde is the stingkyng dede of lecherie / [863] Certes the .v. fyngers of glotenye the fende putteth in the wombe of a man / And with the .v. fyngers of lecherie he gripeth him bi the reynes for to throwe him in to the furneys of helle / [864] there as thei shul haue the fire & the wormes that euere shal laste / & wepinge / & wailynge / sharpe hunger / & thruste / griselynesse of deuels / that shullen al to treden hem withouten respite / & withouten ende / [865] Off lecherie as I seide sourden diuerse spices / as fornicacion that is bitwix man & woman / that ben nat maried / & this is dedly sinne & ayeines nature / [866] Al that is enemy & distruccion to nature / is ayeines nature / [867] Perfay the reson of a man tellith him wel that it is dedly synne / for-asmeche as god forbade lecherie / And seynt Paule seith / yeueth him the regne that is due to no wight but to hem that don dedly synne / [868] Another synne of lecherie is / to bireven a maiden of hir maidenhede / ffor certis he that so dothe / he taketh a maiden out of the highest degre that is in this present liff / [869] & birevith hir thilke precious fruyte / that the booke clepeth the hundrede fruyte / I can nat seie it / in noon other wise in englissh / but in latyn hit hight / Centes[i]mus fructus / [870] Certes he that so dothe / is cause of many damages & vilonyes mo than any man can reken / Right as he somtyme is cause of al the damages that bestes don in the felde / that breken the hegges or the clausure / thorugh whiche he distroyeth that may nat be restorede / [871] ffor certis no more may maidenhede be restored / than an arme that is smeten from the body / may retorne ayeine to wexe / [872] she may haue mercy this woote I wel / if she do penaunce / but neuere shal hit be / that she nas corrupte / [873] And al be it so that I haue spoken somwhat of advoutrie / [1]it is goode to shewen mo perilles that longen to aduoutrie / ffor to eschewe the foule

¶ Paulꝰ.

¶ Centes[i]mus fructus.

synne of [874] aduoutrie / in latyn it is for to seie / approching of other menis wivis / thorugh whiche tho that whilom were first oo flesshe / abunden here bodies to other persones / [875] Off this synne / as seith the wise man / folowen many harmes / ffirst brekyng of feith / & certis in the feith is the keye of cristendom / [876] & whan that feith is broke & lorne / certis cristendom stondith in vayne & withouten fruyte / [877] this sinne is eke a theffte / for theffte generally is / to reve a wighte his thinge ayeines his wille / [878] Certes this is the fouleste thefft that may be / whan a woman stelith hir body from hir housbond / & yivith hit to hir holour to defoule hir / & stelith hir soule from criste / & yivith hit to the deuel / [879] this is a fouler thefft than forto breke a chirche & stele the chaleys / ffor these aduoutres breken the temple of god spiritually / & stelen the vessel of grace / that is the body & the soule / ffor whiche criste
¶ Poule. shal distroien hem as seith seint Poule / [880] sothely of this thefft dovted gretely Iosepth / whan that his lordis wiff praide him of vilonye / whan he seide lo my ladi how my lorde hath taken to me vnder my warde al that he hath in this worlde / ne nothing of his thinges is out of my power / but onely ye that ben his wiff / [881] and how sholde I than do this wikkednes / & synne so orrible ayeines god / & ayeines my lorde / god hit forbede / Allas al to litel is suche trouth now I-founde / [882] The thridde harme is the filthe thorugh whiche thei breken the commaundement of god / & defoulen the auctor of here matrymoigne that is criste / [883] ffor certis in-so-meche that the sacrament of mariage is so noble / & so digne / so meche hit is the gretter synne to breke hit / ffor god made mariage in Paradise in the state of Innocence / to multiplie [1]mankynde to the seruice of god / [884] & therfore is the brekyng therof the more greuous / of whiche breking cometh fals heires ofte tyme / that wrongefully occupien other menis heritage / & therfore wol criste put

hem out of the regne of heuen / that is heritage to goode folke / [885] Of this brekyng cometh oftyn tyme / that folke vnwar wedde*n* or synnen / with here owne kynrede / & namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels / of these foole we*m*men that mowe be likened to a comune gouge / where as men purgen there ordure / [886] what seie we eke of poyto*ur*s that leven bi the horrible synne of putrie & constreinen wo*m*men to yelde hem a *cer*teyne rente of here bodily putrie / y somtyme of his owne wiff / or his childe / as don these baudes / Cert*es* these ben cursed synnes / [887] Vnderstondith eke that advoutrie is sette gladly in the ten co*m*maundementes / bituexe theffte & manslaughter / ffor it is the grettest theffte that may be / ffor it is the theffte of body & of soule / [888] & hit is like homycide / for it kerveth a-two & breketh a-two hem that first were made Oo flesshe / & therefore bi the olde lawe of god / thei sholde be sleyne / [889] But natheles bi the lawe of ih*es*u criste that is the lawe of pite / whan he seide to the womman that was founden in advoutrie / & sholde haue ben sleyne with stones / aft*er* the wil of the Iewes / as was there lawe / Go q*uo*d ih*es*u criste & haue no more wille to synne / or willen to do no more no synne / [890] sothely the vengeaunce of advoutrie is awarded to the peyne of helle / but if it be distorbled bi penaunce / [891] yit ben ther mo spicis of this cursed synne / as whan that oon of hem is religious / or ellis both / or of folke that ben entred in-to order / as subdiacone / & deken / or preste / or hospitelers / & eu*er* the higher that he is in order / the gretter is the synne / [892] The thinges that gretly agregen here synne / is the brekyng of here avowe / of chastite / that thei made whan thei resceivede order / [893] And forther ou*er*e soth it is / that holy order is tresour [1]cheff of god / & his especial signe & marke of chastite / to shewe that thei ben Ioyned to chastite / whiche that is the most *pre*cious liff that is / [894] And eke these ordred folke ben specially entitled to god / & of the

special meyne of god / ffor whiche whan thei don dedly synne / thei ben the special traytours of god / & of his peple / ffor thei leven of the peple / to praie for the peple / And while they ben suche traitours / here praiers availen nat to the peple / [895] ¶ Prestes ben as Aungels / as bi the dignite of here misterie / but for sothe seint Poule seith̄ / that Sathanas transformeth him in an Aungel of light̄ / [896] sothely the preste that haunteth̄ dedly synne / he may be likened to the Angel of derkenesse / transformed / in the Angel of light / he semeth̄ an Angel of light̄ / & but for sothe he is an Angel of derkenesse / [897] suche prestes ben the sones of Belye as shewith̄ in the boke of kynges / that thei weren the sones of Belial / that is the deuel / [898] Belyal is to seyne withouten Iugge And so faren thei / hem thenketh thei ben fre / & han no Iugge / no more than hath̄ a fre Boole / that taketh whiche kow that him liketh in the towne / [899] Right so faren thei bi wommen / ffor right as a fre Boole is I-nough̄ for al a toune / Right so is a wikked preste corrupt / I-nough for al a parissh̄ / or for al a contre / [900] these prestes as seith̄ the booke / ne conne nat the myhysterie of presthode to the pepel / ne god knowith̄ hem nought̄ / thei holde hem nat a-paide as seith̄ the booke / of soden flessh̄ that was to hem offred / but thei toke bi force the flessh̄ that is rawe / [901] Certes right̄ so these olde shrewis / ne holde hem nat a-paide of rosted flessh̄ / & soden flessh̄ / with the whiche the peple feden hem with grete reuerence / but thei wol haue rawe flessh̄ / as men-is wivis & here doughtren / [902] And certis these women that consenten to here harlotries / don grete wronges to criste / & to holy chirche / And to alle halowes / & to alle soules / ffor they [1]bireven him alle these that sholden wourshipe criste / & holy chirche / & pray for alle cristen soules / [903] And therefore haue suche prestes & here lemmans eke that consenten to here lecherie / the malison of al cristen courte / til thei come to amendement /

¶ Paulus.

¶ prestes wol haue rawe flesshe.

[904] The thride spice of advoutrie / is bitwene a man and his wiff / & that is whan thei take no rewarde in here assemblynge / but onely to here flesshly delite / as seith seint Ierome / [905] and rekken of nothinge but ¶ Ierome. that thei ben assembled / bi-cause that thei ben I-mariede al is good I-nough / as thenkith to hem / [906] but in suche folke the deuel hath power / as seide the Aungel Raphael to Tobye / ffor in al here assemblynge thei putten oute ihesu criste of here herte / & yeven hem selff to al ordoure / [907] The .iiij. spice of advoutrie is the assemblyng of hem that ben of here kynrede / or of them that ben of oon affinite / or ellis with hem with whiche hir fader or here kynrede hath deled in the synne of lecherie / this synne maketh hem I-like to houndes / that taken no kepe to kynrede / [908] And certis perentela is in two maners / outher gostly outher flesshly / gostly is to delen with here gossebes / [909] ffor right so as he that engendreth the childe is the flesshly fader / right so is his gossebe his spirituel fader / ffor whiche a woman may no lasse synne assemble with hir gosseb / than with hir owne flesshely brother / [910] The .v. spice is that abhomynable synne of whiche that no man vnnethes oughte to speke ne write / natheles hit is openly rehersed in holy writte / [911] this cursednes don men & women in diuers entente / & in diuers manere / but though that holy writte speke of orrible synne / certis holy writte may nat be defouled / no more than the sonne that shyneth on the mexen / [912] Another synne perteyneth vn-to lecherie / that cometh in sleping / & this synne cometh offte to hem that [1]ben maydens / & eke to hem that ben corrupte / & this synne men clepen pollucion / that cometh in .iiij. maners / [913] somtyme of a languysshinge of body for the humours ben to ranke / & to habundaunte in the bodie of a man / Somtyme for the infirmite & for the feblenes of the vertu retentiff / as phisike maketh mension / Somtyme for surfete of mete & drinke / [914] And somtyme of

violent thoughtes that ben enclosed in man-is mynde whan he gooth to slepe / whiche may nat be withouten synne / ffor the whiche men muste kepe hem wisely / or ellis thei may synne greuously

¶ The remedie ayeines lecherie

[915] NOw cometh the remedie ayeinest lecherie / & that is generally chastite / & continence / that restreyneth al the disordeine mevynge that cometh of flesshly talentes / [916] & euer the gretter merite shal we haue / that moste restreyneth the wikked enchaufynges / or ordour of this synne / And this is in two maners / that is to seie chastite of mariage / & chastite of widewhode / [917] Now shalt thow vnderstonde that matrymonye is lefful assemblynge of man & of woman / that receiven bi vertu of sacrament / the bonde thorugh whiche thei may nat be departed in al there liff / that is to seyn whiles that thei leven bothe / [918] This is as seith the booke a ful gret sacrament / god made hit as I haue seide in Paradise / & wolde him selff be borne in mariage / [919] And for to halowen mariage / he was at a wedding / whereas he torned water vn-to wyne / whiche was the firste miracle that he wroughte here in erthe / bifore his disciples / [920] Trewe effecte of mariage clensith fornicacion / & replesshith holy chirche of good lynage / for that is the ende of mariage / & hit changith dedly synne / in-to venial synne / bitwex hem that ben wedded / & makith the hertes al oon / of hem / [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] as wel as the bodies / [921] this is verry mariage that was establis[1]shed bi god or that synne bigan / whan naturel lawe / was in his right poynte in Paradise / And hit was ordeyned that oo man / sholde haue but oo woman / And oo woman sholde haue but oo man / as seith seint Austyne bi many resons /

¶ Austyne.

[922] ffirst for that mariage is figured bitw[i]x god &

holy chirche / And that other is / for that a man is the hede of the woman / algate bi ordinaunce hit sholde be so / [923] ffor if a woman had mo men than oon / than sholde she haue mo hedes than oon / & that were an orrible thing bifore god / And eke oo woman myghte nat please to many folke attones / And also there shulde neuere be pees ne reste / amonges hem / ffor euerych wolde axe his owne thinge / [924] And ferther ouer no man shulde knowe his owne engendrure / ne who sholde haue his heritage / And the woman sholde be the lesse biloued fro the tyme that she were comune to many men /

[925] Now cometh how that a man sholde bere him with his wiff / And namely in two thinges / that is to seie / in suffraunce & in reuerence / & that shewed criste whan he made first woman / [926] ffor he made hir nought of the hede of Adam / ffor she sholde nat cleyme to grete lordshippe / [927] ffor there as the woman hath the maistrie / she makith to meche disaray / there nedeth noon ensamples of this / thexperience day bi day oughte I-nough suffice / [928] Also certis god ne made nat woman of the foote of Adam / ffor she sholde nat be holden to lowe / ffor she can nat paciently suffre / but god made woman of the ribbe of Adam / ffor woman sholde be felowe vn-to man / [929] A man sholde bere him to his wiff / In feith / In trouthe / & in love / as seith seint Poule / that a man sholde love his wiff / As criste loueth holy chirche / that loued hit so wel that he deyede for hit / so sholde a man for his wiff If hit were nede / ¶ Poule

[930] Now how that a woman sholde be subiecte to hir housbonde / that tellith seint Peter / ffirst in obedience / [931] and eke as seith the Decre / A woman as longe [1]as she is a wiff / she hath noon auctorite to swere / ne to bere wittnesse / withoute leve of here housbondes / that is here lorde / algate he sholde be so bi reson / [932] She sholde eke serve him in al ¶ Petrus.

honeste / & ben attempre of hir array I woot wel that thei shulde sette al here entente to please here hous-bondes / but nat bi queyntise of here array / [933] seint
¶ Ierome. Ierome seith̄ that wives that ben apparelled in silke & in precious purpul / ne mowen nat clothen hem in ihesu
¶ Iohan. criste / Loke what seith̄ seint Iohn̄ eke in this matere
¶ Gregorie. [934] seint Gregorie seith̄ eke that no wight seketh̄ precious array but onely for vayngloríe to ben honoured the more biforn the peple / [935] hit is a grete folie a woman to haue feire array outwarde / & hir silff to be foule inwarde / [936] A wiff sholde eke be mesurable in lokynge / & eke in berynge / & in laugh̄ynge / & discrete in al hir wordes / & in hir dedes / [937] And aboven al wordly thinge she sholde loue hir housbonde with al hir herte / & to him be trewe of hir bodie / [938] so sholde an housbonde eke be trewe of his bodie to his wiff / ffor soth̄ al the bodie of the wiff is the housbondes / so sholde hir herte be / or ellis ther is bitwex hem two / as in that no perfite mariage / [939] Than shal a man vnder-stonde / that for thre thinges a man & his wiff mowe flessh̄ly assemble The first is / in entente to engen-drure of children to the seruice of god / for certis that is the cause fynal of matrymony / [940] A-nother cause is / to yelden euerych̄e of hem to other the dette of here bodies / for neither of hem hath̄ powere of his owne bodie / The thirde cause is to eschewe lecherie / & vilonye / The ferthe for-soth̄ is dedly synne / [941] As to the first it is meritorie / the seconde also / ffor as seith̄ the Decre / that she hath̄ the merite of chastite / that yeldeth̄ to hir housbonde the dette of hir bodie / ye though hit be ayeinst hir likyng & the lust of hir herte / [942] The thride manere is venial synne / & trewly scarsly may any of these ben withoute venial synne / for the corupcion & for the delite / [943] The ferthe manere is / for to vnderstonde [1]as is the assemble onely for amorous loue / & for noon of the forseide causes / but

for to accomplissh thilke brennyng delite / & thei recke neuere how offte / sothly hit is a dedly synne / And yit with sorowe some folke wol peyne hem to do more than here appetite suffisith /

[944] The secounde manere of chastite is to be a clene wedowe & to eschewe thenbrasing of man / & desire thenbrasing of ihesu criste / [945] these ben tho that haue ben wives & haue forgon there housbondes / And eke women that haue don lecherie / & ben releued bi penaunce / [946] And *certes* if that a wiff couthe kepe hir chaste in al / bi licence of hir housbonde / so that she neuere yaff noon occacion that he agilt hit were to hir a grete merite / [947] these manere of women that observen chastite moste be clene in herte / as wel as in bodie / & in thought / & mesurable in clothinge / and in contenaunce / abstynente in etynge / & in drinkinge / in spekynge / & in dede / & than is she the vessel or the boiste / of the blissed Magdaleyne / that fulfilled holy chirche ful of good odoure / [948] The thredde manere of chastite / is virginite / & hit bihovith that she be holy in herte / & clene in bodie / than is she spouse to ihesu criste / & she is the liff of aungels / [949] she is the preising of this world / & she is as these martirs in Regalite / she hath in hir that no tonge may telle / [950] virginite bare oure lorde / ihesu criste / & virginite he was him selff /

[951] A-nother remedie ayeines lecherie / is specially to withdrawe suche thinges / as yeven occasion to that vilonye / as is ease / & etynge / & drinkinge / ffor *certis* whan the pot boylith strongelie / the beste remedie is / for to withdrawe the the (*sic*) fire / [952] sleping longe in grete quiete is eke a grete norice to lecherie / ¶ remedium contra luxuriam. ¶ nota bene

[953] Another remedie a-yeines lecherie is that a man or a woman eschue the companye of hem bi whiche he douteth to be tempted / ffor al be it so that the dede be with-stonde / yit is ther grete temptacion /

[954] ſothely a white wal / al-thoughⁿ it brenne nat fully / bi stikynge of a candel / yit is the wal blak of the lighte [955] [1]ful offte tyme / I rede that no man truste in his owne p*er*feccion / but he be stronger than Sampson / or holiere than Dauid / & wisere than Salomon /

¶ Sampson.
¶ Dauid.
¶ Salomon.

[956] Now that I haue declared yow as I can the .vij. dedly synnes / & some of here braunches / & here remedies / ſothely if I couthe I wolde telle yow the ten comaundeme*n*tes [957] but so highⁿ a doctryne I lete to divines / but natheles I hope to god thei ben touched in this litil tretise eue*r*yche of hem alle /

De secunda *par*te penitencie.

[958] NOw for-asmeche as the sēconde *par*tie of penau*n*ce stonte in confession of mouthe / as I bigan in the chapitre / I seie seint Austyne seithⁿ / [959] synne is eue*r*y worde / & eue*r*y dede / & al that men coveiten ayeines the lawe of ihesu criste / And this is for to synne in herte / in mouthe / & in dede / bi the .v. wittes / that ben / sighte / hirynge / smellynge / tastynge or sauerynge / & felynge / [960] Now is hit good to vnderstonde the circumstances that aggregen mechel eue*r*y synne / [961] thow shalt considre what thow arte that doist the synne / whether thow be male or female / y[o]nge or olde / gentil or thral / fre or se*r*uaunte / hoole or sike / wedded or sengle / ordred or vnordred / wise or foole / clerke or seculere / [962] if she be of thi kynrede bodily or gostly or non / if any of thi kynrede haue synned with hir or non / & many mo thinges /

¶ prima circumstancia peccati

[963] That other circunstaunce is this / whether hit be don in fornicacion / or in aduoutrie or non / or in ceste or non / maiden or non / in mane*r*e of homicide or non / orrible grete synne or smale / & how longe thow hast contenued in synne / [964] The thride circunstaunce is the place where as thow hast don synne / whether in other

¶ Secunda
¶ tercia

men-is hous or in thin owne / in felde or in chirche or in chirchehawe / in chirche dedicate or non / [965] ffor if the chirche be halowed / & a man or a woman spilt his kynde bi wey of synne with-inne that place / or bi wikked temptacion the chirche were enterdited / til it were reconsiled bi the [1]busshoppe / [966] And if he were a preste that dide suche a vilonye / the terme of al his liff he shulde neuere singe masse / & if he dide / he shulde ¶ war ye prestes. do dedly synne at euery tyme that he songe masse / [967] The ferthe circunstaunce is / bi suche mediat- ¶ quarta. ours / as be messangers as for enticement / or for consentement / to bere company with felowshippe / ffor many a wrecche for to bere companye / wil go to the deuel of helle / [968] ffor they that eggen / or consenten to the synne / ben partyners of the sinne / & of the dampnacion of the synne /

[969] The .v. . . . . is how many tymes ¶ quinta. he hath synned / if it be in his mynde / & how offte that he hath falle / [970] ffor he that oft fallith in synne / dispisith the mercy of god / & encresith his synne / & is vnkynde to god / & he wexeth the more feble to withstonde synne / & synneth the more lightliere / [971] & the latter arisith / & is the more eschue to shriven him / & namely to him that hath be his confessour / [972] ffor whiche that folke whan that they falle ayeine in here olde folies / outher thei forleten here olde confessours / al vtterly / or ellis thei departen here shrifft / in diuers places / but sothely such departed shrifft deservith no mercy of god of his synnes / [973] The .vj. circun- ¶ Sexta. staunce is this / whi that a man synneth as bi temptacion / & if him selff procure that temptacion / or bi the exityng of other folke / or if he synne with a woman bi force / or bi hir owne assente / [974] or if the woman mavgre hir hede hath be enforsed or noon / this shal she telle / ffor couetise or for pouerte / & if hit was hir procurynge or non / & suche manere

¶ Septima. harneys / [975] The .vij. circunstaunce is / in what manere he hath doñ his synne / & how that she hath suffred folke to doñ to hir / [976] & the same shal the man telle pleynly / al circunstaunces / & whether he hath synned with comune bordel women or non / [977] or doñ his synne in holy tymes or non / In fastynge tymes or non / or biforn his shrifte or after his latter shrifte / [978] & hath peraventure / broken [1]ther-fore his penaunce enioyned / bi whos helpe / & whos consaille / bi sorcerie & craffte / al moot be tolde / [979] al these thinges after that thei ben grete & smale engregen the conscience of man / And eke the preste that is thi Iugge may the better ben avised in his iugement / & in yevinge of thi penaunce / & that is after thi contricion / [980] ffor vnderstondeth wel / that after the tyme that a man hathe defouled his baptyme bi synne / if he wil come to saluacion / ther is noon other wey but bi penaunce & shrifft / & bi satisfaccion / [981] And namely bi tho two / if ther be a confessour to whiche he may shrive him / & the thridde if he may haue liff to performe hit /

[982] than shal a man loke & considre / if he wol make a trewe & profitable confession / ther moste be .iiij. condiciones therinne / [983] ffirst hit mosf be in

¶ Ezechiel sorowful bitternes of herte / As seith the kyng Ezechiel To god I wol remembre me alle the dayes & yeres of my liff in bitternesse of myn herte / [984] This condicion of bitternesse hath .v. signes / The first is that confession mote be shamefaste / nat for to couere ne to hide his sinne / but for he hath agilt his god / & defouled his soule /

¶ Austyne [985] & here-of seith seint Austyne / the herte travailleth for shame of his synne / & for he hath grete shamefastnes / he is digne to haue grete mercye of god [986] Suche was the confession of the Puplicane that wolde nat heve vp his eighen to heuen / for he had offended god of heuen ffor whiche shamefastnes he had anoon the mercy of god / [987] And therfore seith

seint Austyne / that suche shamefast folke / ben next for-yevenesse & remission / [988] That other signe is humylite of confession / of whicħ seitħ seint Peter / ¶ Peter. humbletħ yow vnder the myght of god / the honde of god is myghti in confession / ffor ther-bi god foryevith the thi synnes / for he alone hatħ the power / [989] & this humylite shal be in herte / & in signe outwarde / ffor right as he hatħ humilite to god in his herte / Right so sholde he humble his body outwarde to the preste that sittetħ in godis place / [990] ffor [1] whiche in no manere / sithen that criste is soueryne / and the preste meene & mediatour bitwex criste & the synnere / & the synnere is the laste bi wey of reson / [991] than sholde nat the synnere sitte as higħe as his confessour / but knele biforn̄ him / or at his feete / but if maladie distorbe hit / ffor he shal nat take kepe who sitte there / but in whos place that he sitteth / [992] A man that hatħ trespased to a lorde / and cometħ to axe mercy / & maketh his accorde / And he sette him doun anoon bi the lorde / men wold holde him outrageous / & nat worthi so sone to haue remission ne mercy / [993] The .iij. signe is that thi confession shulde be ful of teres if ye may / & if ye may nat wepe with youre bodily eyghe / lete thin herte wepe / [994] suche was the confession of seint Peter ffor after that he had for-sake ihesu criste / ¶ Petrus. he went out & wept ful bitterly / [995] The .iiij. signe is that he lett nat for his shame to shewe his confession / [996] suche was the confession of the Magdaleyne / that spared for no shame of hem that were ¶ Magdaleyne. at the fest for to go to oure lorde ihesu criste / & biknowe to him hir synne / [997] The .v. signe that a man be obeisaunt or a woman to resceive the penaunce that is to him enioyned / ffor certis ihesu criste / for the giltes of oo man was obediente to the deth //

[998] The secunde condicion of verray confession / is that hit be hastily don / ffor certis if a man had a dedly wounde / euer the lenger that he tarieth to warisshe

him-selff / the more wold hit corupte / & haste him to his dethe / & eke the wounde wolde be the wers to hele / [999] And right so farith hit bi synne / that longe tyme is in a man vnshewed // [1000] Certis a man ought hastily to shewe his synnes / for many causes / As for drede of dethe that cometh offte sodeynly / & is in no certeyne what tyme hit shal be / ne in what place / And eke the drecching of oo synne / drawith in another synne / [1001] [1]and eke the lenger that he tarieth / the ferther is he from criste / & if he abide in-to his laste day / ful scarsly may he shrive him / or remembre him on his synnes / or repente him / for the grevous maladie / of his dethe / [1002] And for-asmeche as he hath na in his liff / herkened ihesu criste / whan he hath spoken vn-to him / he shal crien vn-to oure lord ihesu crist at his laste day / & scarsly wol he herken to him / [1003] And vnderstonde that this condicion most haue .iiij. thinges / thi shrifft moot be purveide biforn & avised / for wikked haste doth no profite / & that a man can shrive him of his synnes / be hit of pride or of envie / & so forth with the spices & the circumstaunces / [1004] & that he haue comprehended in his mynde / the nombre & the gretnesse of his synnes / & how longe that he hath leyne in synne / [1005] & eke that he be contrite / of his synnes / & in stedfast purpos bi the grace of god / neuere effte to falle ayeine in synne / & eke that he drede & contrewaite him-selff / that he fle the occaciouns of synne / to whiche he is enclyned / [1006] Also that thow shalt shrive the of alle thi synnes to oo man & nat a parcel to oon / & a parcel to another / that is to vnderstonde / in entente to departen thi confession / as for shame or drede / for hit is nought but strangelyng of thi soule / [1007] ffor certis Ihesu criste is al good / in him is noon imperfeccion / & therfore outher he foryeyith al perfitly / or ellis neueradele // [1008] I seie nat if thow be assigned to thi penitencere / for certeyne synne that thou art bounde to shewe to him / al the remanent of thi synnes / of whiche

thou hast be shriven to thi curate / but if it like the of thin humilite / this is no departing of shrifft / [1009] ne I seie nat there as I speke of diuision of confession / if that thou haue licence for to shrive the to a discrete / & an [1]honest preste / & where the liketh / bi the licence eke of thi curate / that thou ne maiste wel shrive the / of al thi synnes / [1010] but lat no blot be bihynde / lete no synne be vntolde / as fer as thow hast remembraunce / [1011] And whan thow shalt be shriven to thi curate / telle him eke of al thi synne that thou hast don / sithen that thou were last I-shriven / this is no wikked entente of division of shrifft /

[1012] And also the verray shrifft axeth certeyne condicions / ffirst that thou shrive the bi thi fre wil / nat constreyned / ne for shame of folke ne for maladie / or suche thinges / ffor it is reson that he that trespaceth with his fre wil / he moot bi his fre wil confesse his trespace / [1013] noon other man shal telle his synne but he him selff / ne he ne shal nat nay it ne denye his synne / ne wretthe him ayeines the preste / for his amonesshynge to lete his synne / [1014] The secunde condicion is / that thi shrifft be lawful that is to seie / that thou that shrivist the / & eke the preste that hireth thi confession / ben verray in the feith of holy chirche // [1015] And that a man be nought dispeired / of the mercy of ihesu criste / as Cayme or Iudas / [1016] and eke a man most accuse him of his owne trespace & nat another / but he shal blame & witen him-selff of his owne malice / & of his synne / & noon other / [1017] but natheles if that another man be occacion of his synne / or entiser of his synne / or if the estate of a persone be suche / thorugh whiche his synne is aggreged / or that he ne may nat pleynly shriven him / but he telle the persone / with whiche he hath synned / than may he telle it [1018] so / that his entente be nat to bagbite the persone but onely to declare his confession /

[1019] Thow shalt nat eke make no maner lesinges in thi confession / for humilite perauenture to seie that thou hast don synnes / of whiche thou were
¶ Austyne. neuere gilti / [1020] ffor seint Austyne seith if thow bi cause of humilite makest lesinges of [1]thi selff / though thow ne were nat in synne biforne yit art thow than in synne thorugh thi lesinges [1021] Thow most eke shewe thi synne / bi thi nowe propre mouthe / but if thou be wexe dome / & nat bi no letter / ffor thou that hast don the synne / thou shalt haue the shame in confession / [1022] Thow shalt nat eke peynte thi confession / bi faire & subtile wordes / to couere the more thi synne / ffor than bigilest thou thi selff & nat the preste / thou most telle it platly be it neuere so foule / ne so orrible / [1023] Thow shalt shrive the eke to a preste that is discrete / to counsaile the / And eke thou sha[l]t nat shrive for vaynglorie / ne for ypocresie / ne for no cause but onely for the dovte of Ihesu criste / & the hele of thi soule / [1024] Thow shalt nat eke renne to the preste al sodeynly to telle him thi synne / as whos tellith a Iape or a tale / but avisily / & with grete deuocion / [1025] And generally shrive the offte / if thou offte falle / offte arise bi confession / [1026] And though thou shrive the offter than ones of thi synne / of whiche thow hast be shriven it is
¶ Austyne. the more merite / And as seith seint Austyne / thou shalt haue the more lightly relesynge / & the grace of god / both of synne & of peyne / [1027] And certis ones a yere at the leste weye hit is lawful for to be houselede / ffor certenly ones a yere alle thinges renovellen /

De satisfaccione.

[1028] NOw haue I tolde of verry confession that is the secunde parte of penaunce /

[1029] the .iij. *par*te of penaunce is satisfaccion / & that stant most gene*ra*lly in almes & in bodily peyne / [1030] Now ben ther .iij. man*er*e of almes / Contricion of herte / that a man openeth̄ him selff to god / Another is to have pete of the defaute of his neighbours / And the thride is in yevyng good counsaile / & comforte gostly & bodily / where men haue nede / & namely in sustenaunce of man-is foode / [1031] & to take kepe of that [1] that a man hath nede of / off these thinges gen*er*ally he hath nede / of foode / of clothing / & herborugh̄ / he hath nede also of charitable counsaille / & visityng in prison / & maladie / & sepulture of his dede bodie / [1032] and if thou maist nat visite the nedeful with thi p*er*sone / visite hem bi thi massage / & thi yiftes / [1033] these ben the gen*er*al almes & workes of charite / of hem that han temporal riches / or discrecion in counsaillyng / Off there workes shalt thow hyre at the day of dome /

[1034] these almesses shaltow don of thin owne p*ro*pre thinges / & hastily & privily if thow maiste / [1035] but natheles if thou maiste nat don hit *priuily* / thou shalt nat forbere to do almes neu*er* a dele though men se hit / so that it be nat don for thanke of the world / but onely for to haue the thanke of oure lorde ih*es*u criste / [1036] ffor as wittnessith̄ Seint Mathew. quinto *capitulo* / A Cite may nat be hidde that on a mountayne sette / ne men lighte nat a lanterne & put it vnder a busshel / but men sette hit on a candelstike / to lighten the men in the hous / [1037] Right so shal youre lighte lighten a-forne men that thei mowe seen youre goode workes / & glorifie / youre fader that is in heuen /

¶ Mathei quinto Capitulo.

[1038] Now as for to speke of bodily peyne / it stonte in praieres / in wakynges / in ffastinges / & in vertuous

techinges of orisons / [1039] ye shul vnder-stonde that orisons / or praiers is for to seie / a pitous wil of herte / that redressith hit in god / & expressith it bi wordes / outwarde to renewe harmes / & to haue thinges espirituel & durable / & somtyme temporal thinges /
¶ Pater noster. off whiche orisons / certis in the orison of the Pater noster / hath ihesu criste enclosed most thinges / [1040] Certis it is privileged of thre thinges in his dignite / ffor whiche it is more digne / than any other praiere / ffor that ihesu criste him selff maked / [1041] and it is shorte / for it sholde be couthe more lightly [1]and for to withholde hit the more esily in herte / & helpen hem selff the offter / with the orison / [1042] And for a man sholde be the lasse wery to seie hit / And for a man may nat excuse him to lerne hit / for it is shorte & so esie / And for hit comprehendith in hit selff / alle good praiers / [1043] The exposicion of this holy praiere / that is so excellent & digne / I bitake these maistres of Theologie / saue thus meche wol I seyne / that whan thou praieste that god sholde foryeve the thi giltes as thou foryeuest hem that agilten the / Be ful wel war / that thou be nat out of charite / [1044] This holy orison amennsith eke venial synne / & therfore hit apperteyneth specially to penaunce /

[1045] This praiere most be trewly seide / & in verry feith // & that men praie to god / ordinatly / discretly / & devoutely / And alwey a man shal putte his wil / to be subiette to the wil of god / [1046] this orison most eke be seide / with grete humblesse / & ful pure / honestly & nat to the anoysaunce of any man or woman / hit most eke be contenued with the workes of charite / [1047] hit availeth eke ayeines the vices of the soule / ffor as
¶ Ierome seith seint Ierome / bi fastynge ben saued the vices of the flesshe / & bi praiers the vices of the soule /

[1048] Affter this thow shalt vnder-stonde / that bodily peyne stonte in waking / for ihesu criste seith / waketh and praieth / that ye ne entre in to wikked

temptacion / [1049] ye shul vnder-stonde eke that fast-ynge stonte in thre thinges / in forberynge of bodily meete / and drinke / & in forberinge of worldly iolitees / And in forberinge of dedly synne / this is to seie / that a man shal kepe him fro dedly synne / with al his myght /

[1050] And thou shalt vnderstonde eke that god ordeyned fastinges / & to fastinges apperteynen .iij. thinges [1051] largenesse to pore folke / gladnesse of herte espirituel / nat to be angry / ne anoyed / ne to grucche for he fasteth / & also at resonable houre for to eete bi [1] mesure / that is for to seie / A man shulde nat eten in vntyme / ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete / for he fasteth /

[1052] Than shalt thou vnderstonde that bodily peyne stante in disciplyne or teching / bi worde / or bi writynge / or bi ensample / also in weryng of heires or of stamyne / or of haberions on here naked flesshe / for cristes sake / & suche manere penaunces / [1053] but war the wel that suche penaunces on thi flesh / ne make nought thin herte bitter / or angery / or anoyed / of thiselff / ffor better it is to caste awaie thin heire / than for to caste a-wey the swettnesse of oure lorde ihesu criste / [1054] And therfore seit[h] seint Poule / ¶ Poule. Clotheth yow as thei that ben chosen of god / in herte of misericorde / debonairte / suffraunce / & suche manere of clothinge / of whiche ihesu criste is more apaiede / than of heire / or of haberioun /

[1055] Than is his disciplyne / in knokkynge of thi breste / in schourginge with yerdes / in knelynges / in tribulacions / [1056] in sufferinge paciently wronges / that ben don to him / And eke vnpacient sufferaunce of maladies / or lesinge of worldly catel / or of wiff / or childe / or other frendes /

[1057] Than shalt thou vnderstonde / whiche thinges distourben penaunce / and that is in .iij. maners / And that is drede / shame / & wanhope / that is desperacion / [1058] And for to speken first of drede / ffor whiche he·

weneth̄ that he may suffre no penaunce / [1059] there ayeines is remedie / for to thenke that bodily penaunce is but shorte / litel / at the regarde of the peyne of helle / that is cruel & so longe / that it lasteth withouten ende /

[1060] Now a-yeines the shame that a man hath to shriven him / and namely these ypocrites / that wolden be holde so *per*fite / that thei haue noon nede to shriven hem / [1061] Ayeines that shame / shal a man thenke / that bi wey of reson / that he / that hath̄ nat ben a-shamed / to do foule thinges / Certis him oughte nat to ben a-shamed to don faire thinges / & goode thinges / & that is confessiou*n*s / [1062] A man shulde eke thenke / that god seeth̄ & woot wel thi thoughtes / [1] & al thi workes / to him may nothing be hidde ne cou*er*ed / [1063] men shulde eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome to them that ben nat penitente / ne shriven in this *pr*esent liff / [1064] ffor alle the creatures in heuen erthe & in helle / shulle se appertely al that they hiden in this worlde /

[1065] Now for to speke of the hope of hem that ben so necligent & slowe to shrive hem / hit stante in two man*er*s / [1066] that on is that he hopeth̄ to live longe / & for to purchase meche riches for his delite / & than he wol shrive him / & as seith̄ he may as him semeth̄ tymely I-nough̄ come to shriffte / [1067] Another is of the surquidrie that he hath̄ in the hope of cristes m*er*cy / [1068] And ayeines the first vice he shal thenke / that oure liff is in no sekernesse / & eke that al the riches in the worlde is in auenture & passinge as a shadowe on a wal // [1069] And as seith̄ seint Gregorie / that hit app*er*teyneth̄ to the grete rightwisnesse of god / that neu*er*e shal the peyne stinte of hem / that neu*er*e wolde withdrawe hem fro synne here thankes but eu*er* contenue in synne / for that *per*petual wil to do synne / shullen thei haue *per*petual peine //

¶ Gregorius

[1070] Wanhope is in two man*er*s / The first wanhope is in the m*er*ci of criste / That other is that thei

thenke / that thei myghte nat longe *perseuere* in goodnesse / [1071] The first wanhope cometh of that he demeth that he hath synned so gretly / so offte / & so longe lien in synne / that he shal nought be sauede / [1072] Certis ayeines that cursed wanhope he shulde thenke / that the passion of ihesu criste is more stronge for to vnbynde / than synne is for to bynde / [1073] Ayeines the seconde wanhope [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

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[1074] . . *no gap in the MS.*] that he demeth that he shulde nat longe *perseuere* in goodnes / he shal thenke that the febelnesse of the Deuel may nothing don but if men wil suffre him / [1075] & eke he shal have strengthe of the helpe of god / & of al holy chirche & of the *proteccions* of Aungels / if hem luste //

[1076] Than shul men vnderstonde what is the fruyte of penaunce[1] as after the worde of ihesu criste / hit is the endeles blisse of heuen / [1077] there ioye hath no contrariouste of woo / ne greuaunce / there al harmes ben passed of this *present* liff / there as is the sekernesse from the peyne of helle / there as is the blisful companye that reioysen hem *euermore* / *euerych* of otheris Ioye / [1078] there as the body of man that whilom was foule & derke is more clere than the sonne / there as whilom the bodi was sike freyle feble & mortal / is immortal / & so stronge & so hole / that there may nothinge empeire it / [1079] there as neither is hungre / thrust / ne colde / but *euery* soule replenesshed with the sight of the *perfite* knowynge of god / [1080] this blisful regne may man purchace bi *pouerte* espirituel / & the glorie bi lowenesse / the plente of ioye bi hungre & thruste / & the reste bi travaile / & the liff bi deth / & mortificacion of synne /

[1 leaf 399, back, and last]

To thilke liff he vs bringe that bought vs with his precious bloode. Amen /

Here enden the talis of Caunturbury / And next thautour taketh leve.

[1081]
NOw preye I to hem alle that herken this litil tretis or reden / that if ther be any thing in hit that liketh hem / that therof thei thanke oure lord ihesu criste / of whom procedeth al witte & al goodnesse / [1082] And if ther be any thing that displesen hem / I preie hem also that thei a-recte hit / to the defaute of myne vnconnynge / & nat to my wil that wolde ful fayne haue seide better if I hadde connynge / [1083] ffor oure booke seith / al that is writen is writen for oure doctryne / & that is myne entent / [1084] wher-fore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of god / that ye preie for me / that criste haue mercy on me / and foryeve me my gultes / [1085] & namely of my translaciones / & endit-ynges of worldly vanytees / the which I revoke in my re-traccions / [1086] As is the booke of Troylus / the booke also of ffame / the booke of .xxv. ladies / the booke of the Duchesse / the booke of seint Valent[1] [1 day of þe parlement of briddes // The Tales Caunter-bury, tho þat sownen into syn / [1087] The bok of þe leon / And many anoþer boke if thei were in my remembraunce / & many a songe / & many A lecherous tayl. ¶ Of þe which Crist for his grete mercy for-yeue me þe syn. [1088] ¶ But of the translacion of Boece de consolacion and oþer bokeȝ of legendes of Seintes & Omelies / And moralite & deuocion / [1089] That thank I oure lorde Iesu Crist & his blisful moder and al the seinteȝ in heuen [1090] Biseking hem þat þei fro hen forthe vnto my lyves ende send me grace to bewaile my giltes / And to stodien to þe sauacioun of my soule ¶ And graunte me space of verrey penitence ¶ Con-

[1 Hatton MS. 1, leaf 275, back]

fessioun and satisfaccioun to doñ in this present life [1091] þorgh þe benigne grace of him þat is king of kinges & prest ouer alle prestes. þat bought vs with the precious blode of his hert / [1092] so þat I may beñ oon of hem at þe day of dome. þat shullen be saued And he that wrote this boke also / Amen. Qui cum patre &c.[1]] [1 Hatton extract ends.]

[late hand] O Mater Dei T H Memento Mej

[late hand] Pertinet Thomã Heed ciuis Londoniar'

[late hand] Eleison

[*Two blank leaves scribbled over.*]

End of Selden MS.

APPENDIX (to Group B, p. 587).

[*Christ Church MS.* 152.] [on leaf 173, back, sign. k 2, back]

¶ Sire Nonnes preest oure hoost seyde a none
y-blessed be thy breth & euery stoone
This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere
But be my trouthe if *thou* were seculere
Thow woldeste bene a tredefoul a right
ffor if thow haue corage as *thou* haste myght
The were nede of hennes as I wene
Ye moo than .vij. tymes seventene
See whiche braunnes hath *this* gentel preeste
So grete a nekke & so large a breeste
He loketh as a Sparhauke with his yen
Hym nedeth nat his colour for to dyen [leaf 174, sign. k. 3]
with Brasile ne with Greyne of Portyngale /
Now sire faire falle yow for youre tale
And alfir he with full mery chere
Saide vnto a nother as ye shulle here

Here is ended the Nonnes prestes tale
And folowith the prologe of the Maunciples tale

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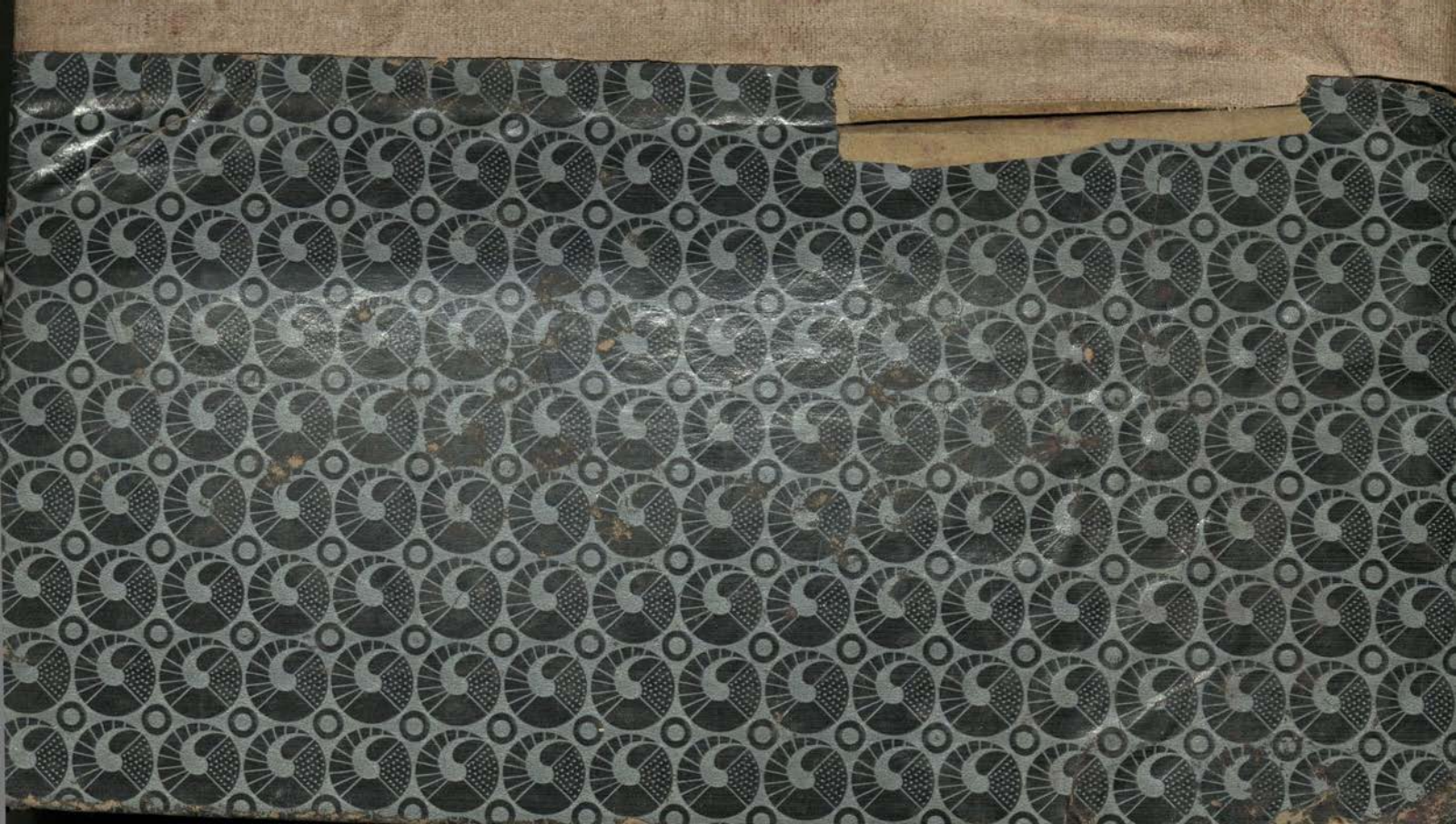
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